# HAUNTS OF THE EAGLE ARTHUR W.FOX

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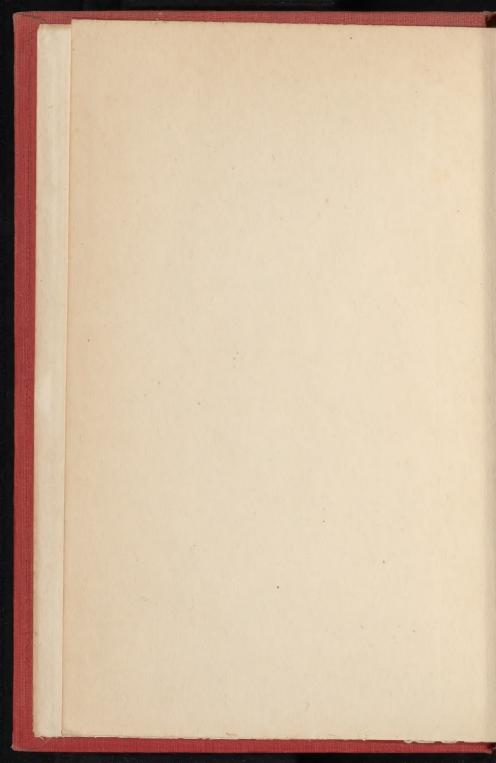
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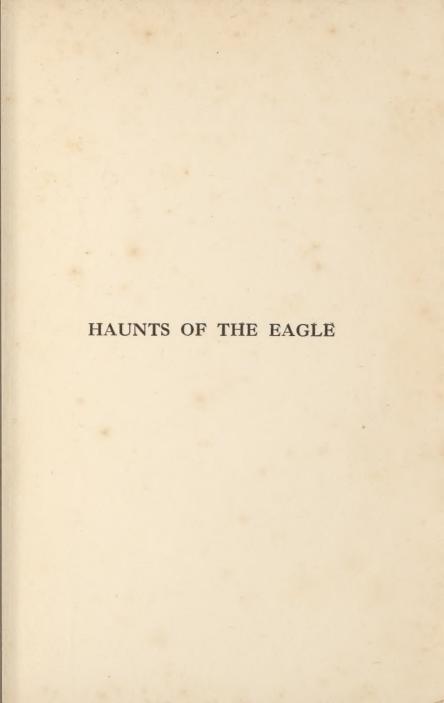
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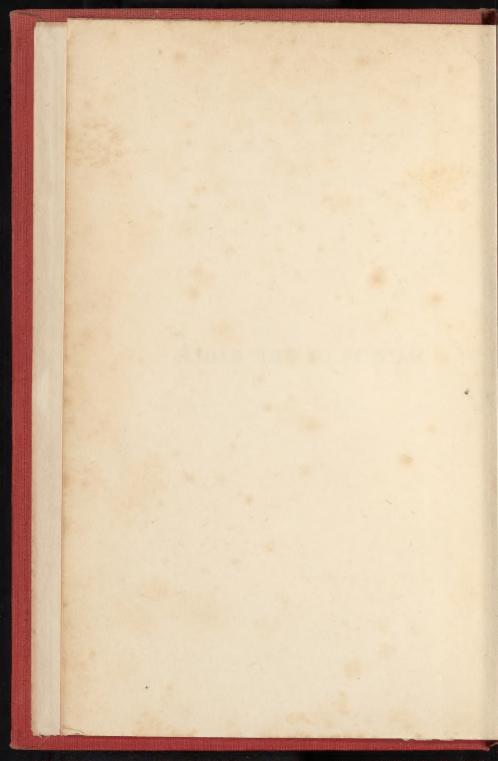
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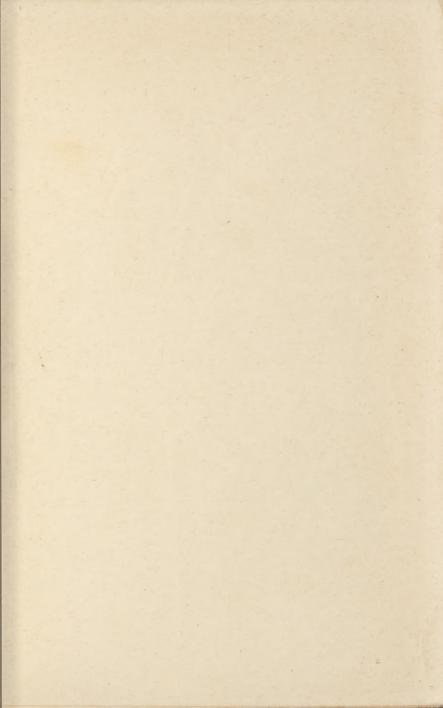


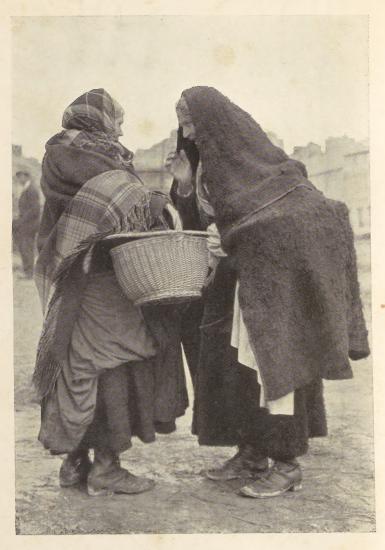












A GOSSIP

## HAUNTS OF THE EAGLE

MAN AND WILD NATURE IN DONEGAL

BY

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#### **PREFACE**

THE following sketches are the product of an intimate acquaintance with County Donegal. Many years ago the proofs of a guide-book to the County were most kindly submitted to me to look over and correct, which I found so well done that it needed little amendment. I have spent long periods amongst the wild scenery of that most delightful part of Ireland and at one time knew many of its fine peasantry. What I have attempted to describe I have seen, what I have told in the matter of tradition I have heard from the peasants themselves. It may be thought that I have overstrained the description of the eagle and the view from Errigal; I have written just what I felt upon each occasion. Sometimes I have been stirred to enthusiasm by what I have seen and heard, and I have not hesitated to write with the same enthusiasm.

Dr. MacDevitt many years ago published the most interesting guide-book to the County, which inspired me to go thither. In many cases, inevitably I tell the same traditions as he told with much greater skill. I have not taken my account of them from his book, though it would have been much easier to have done so. Similarly in writing "The Four Masters" I have

seen the original manuscript and Dr. O'Donovan's excellent edition. My quotations have been taken from that, though they have been suggested by Dr. MacDevitt's book, and I owe him a debt of gratitude for having suggested them to me. As an antiquarian and naturalist I know my own defects. I do not know the Gaelic tongue and shall have spelled many of the words and names with a fine incorrectness. As a naturalist I may have been defective in my observations, but they were carefully made and I took notes of them at the time.

My deep interest in the future of Ireland has never wavered, and these sketches are a humble tribute to my feelings for her. My reading of her past history has made me ashamed of her treatment by my own country. If any doubt my statements let them read Dr. P. W. Joyce's admirable "Short History of the Irish People" and they will be obliged to admit the brutality and occasional treachery of the Elizabethan and Jacobean Lords Deputy. I have still faith that the "distressful country" will rise up from her present chaos and attain to a real place in the history of nations. It has always been the English habit of mind to imagine that what suits England must of necessity suit our neighbours across the water. That is a profound mistake: for some reason or other the Irishman is profoundly different in temperament and usages from his graver neighbour. It is just because of this persistent misunderstanding over many centuries that our present troubles have arisen.

I owe to my warm-hearted, hospitable Irish friends

some of the happiest hours of my life, just as I owe to Irish scholars and antiquarians much of the keenest pleasure and profit in my reading. It is my aim as a Lancashire man to induce my own countrymen to look upon their neighbours with greater kindness; thus I have written these sketches. I have not attempted to do more than give a faint hint of the wonderful brogue, which no Englishman has ever yet mastered, nor do I think he ever will. I have tried to picture the wonderful scenery, with here and there a few personal touches of Irish life. As such I leave them to the reader, with the hope that he will find them in a small degree as interesting as the experiences were to myself.

I cannot close this note without thanking Dr. MacDevitt for his excellent guide-book of "The Donegal Highlands." I have tramped to almost every place mentioned in it, and had his accounts of folk-lore confirmed in their respective situations by the mouth of the peasantry. He introduced me to a study of "The Annals of the Four Masters," and to him I owe a close acquaintance with the county, which has led to my looking over the proofs of one of the more popular guide-books.



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#### HAUNTS OF THE EAGLE

#### HAUNTS OF THE EAGLE

He clasps the crag with crooked hands; Close to the sun in lonely lands, Ring'd with the azure world, he stands.

The wrinkled sea beneath him crawls; He watches from his mountain walls, And like a thunderbolt he falls.

-Tennyson.

THE solitudes dear to the golden eagle are few and growing fewer in the British Islands year by year. He still holds to his desolate fastnesses in the northern and western Highlands of Scotland, where he is suffered to build his nest and aid his mate to rear their savage chicks. Elsewhere the gamekeeper with his gun has done much to extirpate the kingly creature, or by climbing to the eyrie he has robbed the nest at the imminent peril of his life. When the nest has been robbed the royal builders seldom attempt to make another or to rear a brood the same year. Doubtless the gamekeeper may have saved the life of more than one sickly fawn or weakly lamb, he may have spared a timid hare for the brutality of coursing or the fangs of the hound: but how irreparable has been the loss to the true bird-lover, whose weapon is a field-glass not a fowling-piece. Even a fool can butcher the most striking of our native birds, or chase it away from the lonely heights

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amid which it is wont to dwell. But for all his wisdom the wisest man cannot bring it back to circle through the empyrean, or to swoop down upon its

quivering prey.

Yet surely the family of this singularly stately bird is never so large as to imperil seriously the fawn or lamb, while it commonly chooses the weaker of either, the one less likely to survive. It may be true, as some sage philosophers—all philosophers are not sage —maintain, that by the law of evolution those plants and animals survive which co-operate with and do not prey upon others. If that be so, it must be admitted that man is a partial exception to the law: he does prey upon others whether plants, animals, or human beings, though he may co-operate with some, yet he Moreover, civilization is intruding its survives. somewhat ugly visage into the remoter solitudes; civilization beloved of man, but abhorred by the eagle. The selfishness of many motorists is conspicuous, who wish others to incur the expense of making roads for them through the few places reserved for the genuine country-lover, who uses his legs to the benefit of his health and his eyes to help others by his observations.

Hence there is small reason to fear that the golden eagle will ever become so numerous as to be a source of severe injury to the shepherd or gamekeeper, while it may actually rid them of some of their troublesome foes. The hen lays usually only two eggs, though three have been recorded, so that the family is always small, even if all of the chicks reach maturity. The birds feed most commonly on hares or such birds as ptarmigan: only rarely do they snap up a fawn or a lamb. There is then no sufficient reason why they should not be spared to lend grandeur to a lonely land and to delight the heart of all genuine naturelovers. So, too, a stern check ought to be put upon the soulless depredations of the professional naturalist, who exists to a large extent upon the slaughter of rare living beings. He is the egg-robber in chief:

he is the taxidermist who in vain strives to give the appearance of life to his butchered victim, the feathers of which lose their lustre, even if the utmost care be taken to preserve it, while a glass eye looks as like the real bird's eye as a similar contrivance does

when used to trim out a human being.

In the heart of County Donegal the Derryveagh Mountains, running parallel to the striking Errigal group, rise from the expanse of russet-brown bog with bare and precipitous flanks. Built up of white quartzite, when the sun lights up their abrupt slopes, they tower into the clear blue sky, dazzling, white, majestic, glittering like a lesser Sierra Nevada. By the fine taste of the ancient Irish the separate heights have each its descriptive name exactly fitting its shape or appearance and sometimes tinged with poetic fancy. Muckish, or "the pig's back" stretches its broad ridge to the north-east, until it takes the final form of a shining peak fronting the little town of Creeslough. Parted from it by two lesser eminences and that wonderfully picturesque ridge, the Beaghy, towards the south, Errigal or "white arrow" cuts the air like a huge pyramid and closely resembles a flint arrow-head of the older Stone Age. From some directions its double-peaked summit is sharpened into a single point: but for the most part the two peaks are to be seen linked together by a narrow ridge. The Ark of Noah is said to have rested between them, as it may well have done, when it was in Ireland! Beneath its northern slope and under the Beaghy lies the deep-set, wild-looking Altan Lough, into which a stone might almost be thrown from the summit, so precipitously does the mountain rise from the dark waters.

Farther to the south stands the great knob of Slieve Snacht, or "snow mountain," like the crystalline dome of some titanic temple, which is the last important summit of the Derryveagh Mountains proper. Let the unwary traveller, who has rejoiced

in the homely hospitality of the cosy little inn at Crolly Bridge, take heed how he attempts to climb the mountain from this side. There is indeed a lane leading over the lower ridge to a remote village, which will bring him, after five miles of treacherous walking, about half-way to the top. But the greater part of the lane is distinctly "soft" in the expressive language of the country-folk, and the bog beyond is "softer" still, which will give him salutary experience in Irish mountain-climbing, but may also be the inspiration of not a little profitless but comforting profanity. Furthermore, there is, or was, an awkward gamekeeper, who has an unaccountable objection to the traveller's climbing of a low wall and his subsequent crossing of a region almost destitute

of game, though not unvisited by snipe.

Until a few years ago a herd of wild goats found a scanty subsistence upon the niggardly herbage. But the sportsman, as he vaingloriously styles himself, has wantonly destroyed the last of these timid scourers of the deeply hidden dells. His main object seems first and foremost to brag about his mischievous folly, while he takes a delight in using their skins to make mats for his bedroom and their stuffed heads to stare him out of countenance with their glass eyes in his hall. It is curious to note in passing how modern man has turned the need of his primitive ancestor into his own sport: the one hunts for mischief, as the other hunted for food, so that we have not advanced very far from the Stone Age in this respect. It is said that electric signalling was first tried from Slieve Snacht in the British Islands, on what authority I know not. But the top is excellently adapted to the process, when once it has been reached, a feat comparatively easy from the other side, where the picturesque road to Doochary Bridge runs beneath its eastern flank.

Sharply cut out of hard rock the "Poisoned Glen" divides a shoulder of Slieve Snacht from the

barren summit of Dooish, or "black back." For many years I could not prevail upon any of the scattered inhabitants of the neighbourhood to explain why the desolate corrie bore so grim a name. Whenever I asked the question, I was put off with the unsatisfying answer, "Ah, sure and it's nothing but a poisoned glen!" Had I understood the native Gaelic I should probably have fared better; such knowledge would have given the people confidence in me, they would have known that I was asking for information and with no desire of poking fun at their ancient legends. At length I fell in with the venerable gardener at one of the great houses not far away. He proved to be a veritable mine of folk-lore, though his means of communication was a singularly monotonous voice not unlike the drone of an Irish bagpipe, which alternately irritated the nerves and induced sleep. I listened gratefully as long as I could endure the strain, and was rewarded by the acquisition of much varied information, some of which is not in the books of folk-lore, while most of it differed in many particulars from all of them.

From the top of Errigal I had often looked out upon the rugged coast of Tory Island clean cut upon the Atlantic Ocean: more than once I had passed beneath its savage cliffs on my way to Sligo. In the far past this desolate land was under the sway of Balor of "the mighty blows," who could fell an ox with his fist. Here he ruled in primitive state, holding much of the neighbouring mainland under his sway. He was endowed with an invaluable gift: he had an "evil eye" set in the back of his head, which, however, he could not keep open unless it was propped up by a stout stake—there were giants in those days. When once his eye was set in position, Balor had only to turn his head upon his enemies and they were blasted by its deadly gaze. He had no children save one daughter Ethnea, by whom he was threatened with serious danger. A Druid

prophesied to him that a son would be born to her who would kill his grandfather. Forewarned by the prophecy Balor resolved if possible to prevent its fulfilment. Like Argive Acrisius, who immured his daughter Danäe in a brazen tower for a precisely similar reason, the Irish prince imprisoned Ethnea in a lonely castle with none but female attendants to

wait upon her.

But his precautions were vain: a young hero, Kineely, heard of the unhappy damsel's woeful plight, gained access to her, wooed and won her, and made her mother of twin sons. When Balor heard the fatal tidings, he was moved to great wrath: first he fell suddenly upon Kineely and cut off his head on a large stone near Gortahork, where his clotted blood can still be seen on the Clough-Kineely, or "Kineely's Stone," a huge block of quartzite with a deep-red vein mounted on a column in the grounds of one of the former generations of the Olphert family. Having thus made away with his objectionable son-in-law, he turned his attention to his infant grandsons, sending one of his henchmen to lay hold of them and drown them in the sea. In spite of the prayers and tears of the distracted mother the henchman seized the twins, pinned them up in a blanket, and as he thought cast both of them into the noisy waves. But the pin had given way at a corner of the blanket, and one of the children fell out into the grass by the wayside, where he was found by a herdsman and reared for his own. So tenacious are the Irish of their national traditions, that the inlet where the other child was drowned, is called "Port a delg," or "Bay of the Pin" to this day.

The rescued twin grew up safely into strong manhood under the name of MacKineely, or "Kineely's son." In due time his foster-father told him of his royal birth and of the sad fate of his father and brother. The young man listened eagerly: burning with indignation he made up his mind to be revenged

upon his savage grandfather at the first favourable opportunity. Nor was his anger diminished when he accidentally overheard Balor boasting of how cleverly he had falsified the prophecy of the Druid by killing Kineely and drowning his boys. He gathered an army of the youth of his own age, defeated Balor in battle and at last drove him into the glen lying between Slieve Snacht and Dooish. The entrance to this lonely corrie is almost closed by a lofty wall of quartzite, which is deeply scored by wind and weather. Behind this wall lay Balor snugly hidden beneath a great pile of peat, while MacKineely and his brave men kept a close watch on the outside. Climbing up this wall he caught sight of a slight movement in the peat: at once he thrust his spear into the spot, pierced the evil eye of his grandfather and thus put an end to his life. Instantly the poison spirted forth, flooding the glen and deeply scoring the wall behind which the old man was hidden. From henceforth the glen has been known as the "Poisoned Glen," a name which it bears at the present time. Such is the legend told me by the old gardener, the conclusion of which differs from the ordinary story.

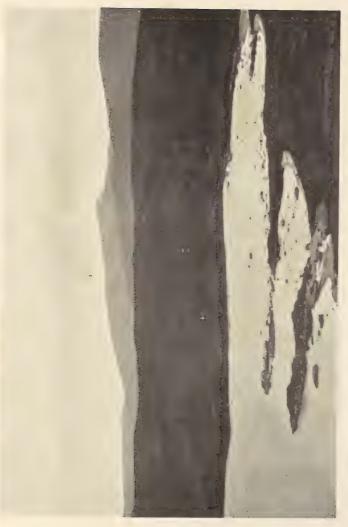
The glen itself is wildly and grandly beautiful: on one side it is flanked by all but perpendicular cliffs gleaming white and ascending to the height of at least fourteen hundred feet. In one corner a tumultuous stream leaps down the granite boulders from which it was born, which vainly strives to hinder its headlong course to quieter quarters at the bottom of the glen. On the other side rises a rugged slope of mingled heather, bent-grass, crumbling rock, choice flowers, and thickets of dwarf furze, watered by a thousand tiny rills, and ascending to the top of Dooish. The bottom of the glen itself enforces wary walking: for the most part it is one great shaking bog watered by the stream which flows into Dunlewey Lough. Tufts of heather, occasional spars of

bog-fir, rare orchids, belated flowers of the bog violet and the smallest of the butterworts give some consolation to the botanist who leaps from hummock to hummock in search of a comparatively safe foothold. Not far from the entrance of the glen stands a small but costly church built out of the shining white stone of the neighbourhood by some pious founder to supply the spiritual needs of the three Protestant

families of that part of the country.

It was on a cloudless day in early August more than twenty years ago, that I first found myself in the grim loneliness of the Poisoned Glen. I had been in search of a so-called "bee-hive monastery," which once stood near the site of the present Dunlewey House. All the remains visible were seven or eight rounded heaps of loose stones and a flagstone with a cross incised upon it. These heaps were all that was left of the "cloughauns" or drystone rounded huts, which may have been standing in the days of Columba or Columbkille. Not a little disappointed in the scantiness of the relics I turned to the wild glen for consolation. The shining rocks were baked by the fierce glow of the sun, and the very blue of the sky seemed almost burned into a shimmering transparence. The cliffs twinkled with millions of diamond-sparkles dancing in a bed of mother o' pearl, blotched with splashes of yellow and golden green circles of a tiny lichen. On an especially white expanse of rock sat a gay red admiral butterfly sunning its gorgeous wings. It had not long come out of the husk of the chrysalis and had certainly found its way into a spot quite unsuitable to the continuation of its race.

Path there was none, save the slender track of a few lonely sheep through the heather and sweet gale. The purple heath flushed its delicate clustered bells through the dazzling radiance in marked contrast with the paler heather. The margin of the stream was trimmed with gay saxifrages, such as bloom in



DOOISH MOUNTAIN



the late summer, marshalled by russet and green spears of rush and sedge. The brown bog was silvered over with large patches of cotton-grass fast running to seed and variegated with a bright green undergrowth of treacherous moss. Wherever it could fix its wiry roots, the mountain hawk-weed lifted its tall stems crowned with yellow blooms swaying gently with the weight of vagrant bees. The busy burnet-moth with its burnished wings of metallic bronze shot with crimson toyed with the heather, and darted from flower to flower, itself as gay as any. Here and there the snowy blooms of the grass of Parnassus peeped forth from the bog with their dainty petals picked out with green veins. From somewhere a solitary humming-bird moth flashed forth, hovered over the hawk-weed, found nothing to its taste and vanished as swiftly as it had come. Over the heather the stately emperor moth shot headlong, making eyes amongst the pink blossoms. The slow breeze scarcely stirred the golden-brown sweet gale into languorous fragrance rising to the little banks of dark earth smiling with wide open no less fragrant wild thyme.

Bees kept time to the breeze with a leisured humming, to prove that they were busy whoever else was swathed in indolence. The bee is after all an obtrusive moralist, and persists in droning the call to work when others need to rest. A large blue dragon-fly was chasing its minute game near the edge of the stream, its dainty body shining in the clear sunlight like a fairy column of purest sapphire. From the garden of Dunlewey House a single female white butterfly was flitting about like a budding poet in search of cabbage, and looking like a scrap of paper tossed by the wind in that uncongenial spot. The grasshoppers twanged their monotonous mandolins answering one another's challenge with the perverse zeal of the barnyard fowl. The insect-world was all astir rejoicing in the slumberous heat of the midday: even such birds as had recovered from the moulting-season seemed too tired to tune their autumn carol, save one little wren whose penetrating

voice made the silent valley ring with music.

For myself I had no mind to rest in that valley sheltered as it was from almost every breath of heaven and scorched by the full heat of the sun pouring down right overhead. I was not tempted even by the blithe company of the dainty blue butterflies shining like sprays of flitting forget-me-not, nor by the green and purple hair-streaks glancing like living emeralds and amethysts, nor by the small coppers flaming in burnished scarlet. I had set out to climb the sloping mountain-side and take my way to the top of Dooish. My chief reason for this ascent was the fact that scarcely any mountaineer thinks it worthy the effort, and the mountain itself had always blocked my view eastward from the brow of Errigal. Though comparatively gentle, the ascent was by no means easy: the heat was intense, and as happened in very different circumstances to the usher Eugene Aram "great drops were on my brow." Scarcely a breeze deigned to fan my streaming forehead, and a steady rivulet flowed down my back, which but for the hindrance of my knickerbocker straps would have reached my boots. My face was purple as a red cabbage, and my hair above took a double tinge of its normally gingerous hue.

The little rills made pleasant music to the air, but they rendered the foothold insecure to the feet. Once I chanced to set my right foot upon a deceptively solid-looking tuft of grass and found my leg slowly disappearing down into an unsuspected boggy hole. Before I could draw it back the other leg also descended into a similar position, so that I was left astride of a dripping rocky ledge covered with the stiff leaves of the London Pride still spiked with its seeding stems. The situation was humorous and pleasantly cool, but not otherwise satisfactory in its

present circumstances or in its future prospects. When after a violent struggle I did disengage myself with my boots still intact on my feet, I nearly made an involuntary descent backwards down the steep slope. There are two ways of going down a mountain; the more usual way head over heels, and the less usual and quicker manner, of heels over head. I had never tried the second, nor had any inclination to do so in spite of the illustrious example of Redgauntlet's friend Pate-in-peril. With another violent effort I righted myself, and had leisure to survey my condition. I soon found that my lower garments had assumed a colour picturesque in itself, but by no means the original hue bestowed upon them by the skilful Irish cottage-dyers. I had taken upon me part of the "coat of clay," which the wise woman declared

to be needful for the getting of wisdom.

What was more disagreeable I found that my boots and stockings in particular had contracted that peculiar kind of muddy odour, which distinguishes the roach from most other kinds of fresh-water fishes. But such minor inconveniences are merely incidents in a pilgrimage through unknown ways; indeed they serve to give an agreeable variety to a mountainclimb. Not a whit discouraged I struggled upwards, carrying with me rather more than my natural proportion of earth. The surface grew harder as I neared the top, a circumstance by no means common on Irish mountains: bare rocks, dwarf willows, trailing cranberry bushes, snowy coronals of rock bedstraw and tiny tufts of bilberries were arranged on either hand in fantastic patterns by Nature's matchless skill. A pair of swallows had soared to the height and were busily engaged in making preparations for their early departure to warmer climes. They chased flies far too small for my less keen sight, and their hunt was clearly satisfactory to them, for they seldom ceased to utter their shrill sweet song. Next moment I almost fell into a flock

of sheep, which had been nestling in an unsuspected hollow bright with springing grass, and they scattered

on all sides with indignant exclamations.

A goat, which was browsing on the dwarf willows, paused for a moment to look at me; then he made off with most astonishing leaps and bounds over the broken surface, and I was left alone but for the whirring insects. Around, below, and above the solitude was so complete that it was only broken by the twittering of the deep-blue birds, the murmuring of many bees, the tinkling of rills, the faint note of the wheat-ear, the occasional bleating of the sheep and the far-off bark of a restless dog. At length I reached a suitable hollow, a veritable fairy bower built of glittering white rocks, trimmed here and there with lovely garlands of trailing mountain-plants and curls of green ivy. I paused to take breath, and finding that I was virtually at the top began to look about me. At my feet a bubbling spring forced its way through the stubborn crag, shaping itself into a tiny lake with a snowy pebbled beach and a margin fringed with rare sedges and blue Alpine forget-menots. That was the boundary of my rocky bower, and though I was so close to them the swallows often visited its shining waters. Once they were daring enough to take their afternoon bath: it was delightful to watch them, as they threw the water over their wings and back, sometimes seeming to sink right under its limpid wavelets. The glassy surface of the spring was rippled over, for it was the parent of a runnel, which tumbled down from one of its corners towards the valley below, gathering force and volume at each downward leap. Yet a merry company of water-boatmen plied their tiny oars in the transparent water, heedless of their inevitable fate. Drawn irresistibly by the strength of the current to the side the little creatures after a vain struggle to retrace their course were swept down below, possibly wondering where their next halting-place would be.

They had just disappeared from sight when a gay painted lady spread its spangled pattern on the warm stones, on the upper wings of which the fanciful can trace a rude map of England and Wales. The languid insect seemed almost too listless to ply its gently rustling wings, till a sudden gust caught it and bore it fluttering along towards the road, which wound like a white serpent between its borders of bog through the western valley far beneath. The finely chiselled fronds of the green spleenwort peeped out from clefts in the solid rock, while here and there the sturdier plumes of the sea spleenwort looked forth from the crevices of the floor of the bower. Over the moist patches of mingled stones and sand the dark-hued cushions of the moss-campion in the full glory of its pink blooms spread their trim couches for Finvarra, king of the fairies, and his shadowy Close to the spring was a bed of the tiniest of the butterworts, which I had already seen in the glen below. But here it was in full flower, and its yellow-green rosettes of leaves were dotted with the remains of many an unlucky insect, which had been unwise enough to alight upon their treacherous surface to die by slow degrees.

Behind me stood a low wall of rocks as smooth as if they had been polished by the hand of man, through which by a happy chance a natural window had been left, so that I could see what was going on over the lower part of the summit without being seen in my turn. The white crags were so warm that I could follow the example of Nausicaa and her damsels, and after washing my stockings stretched them upon the sun-burned crags, where they looked weird enough in that mountain solitude, but dried in quite a short time. Thus I was able to perform a Homeric occupation upon an Irish mountain at a height of about two thousand feet above the level of the sea. It was like a return to a more primitive time, when the daughters of kings as wealthy as Alcinöus were

expected to preside over the washing of the family linen, and actually took their part in that cheerful process. Then an errant bee dropped on my bare leg presumably taking it for some huge kind of flower: but fortunately it soon discovered its mistake, and after buzzling angrily round my red face for a time went in search of a more suitable pasturage without leaving any unpleasant marks of its presence behind. Formic acid is said to be a cure for rheumatism: I had no rheumatism and was not minded

to try an injection of that irritating fluid.

The prospect before me and around was magnificent: to the west towered the twin peaks of Errigal shutting off much of the view and seeming so close that one could almost leap from the one mountain to the other. The shining dome of Slieve Snacht lay to the south, the broad back of Muckish to the north. Through the gap Horn Head rose sheer and forbidding, and far away over the sea stood Tory Island lighted up into a deep drab hue, where its cliffs sank into the whitening waves. Beneath me stretched a mingled expanse of barren bog, distant villages, lower hills, countless lakes, bounded at its farthest edge by a riband of golden sand bordering the blue Atlantic wrinkled with swaying billows and gently laving the dark cliffs of innumerable islands. The murmur of myriads of insects, the low music of the bees swelling and diminishing as they sank or rose over the flowers, the continuous plash of falling water, the light sobbing of the swooning breeze blended into a soothing harmony of slumberous sound. I sat long feasting my eyes upon the tranquil grandeur of the landscape, which was all but entirely removed from the jarring noises and squalid sights of so many of man's wonderful works in his towns and cities.

A momentary hush sank upon the scene, still as that silence which often heralds the coming of thunder: even the insects seemed to sink into still.

ness, when there rose a sudden clamour of many frightened birds sweeping along the mountain-side to some place of refuge. Then a piercing bloodcurdling shriek rang through the startled air. I caught my breath and at once hid myself in my rocky bower with my face turned toward the natural window, so that I could see whatever might take place on that lonely spot. Never before had I heard that dissonant cry: yet it seemed quite familiar to me, and I recognized it at once. At last I was destined to rejoice in the fulfilment of a passionate desire, which had haunted my heart for years. At last it was to be my high privilege to see the golden eagle, not as a miserable draggled specimen in the cage of a stuffy collection, but in its native wilds, free as the air which it cleaves with its mighty wings. I knew that in former times the royal bird had made its eyrie in Glenveagh by the side of a waterfall which drops at least a thousand feet and is an awe-inspiring spectacle, when it is in flood.

Glenveagh with its sublime scenery and its tragic history lay just beneath me, and I could hear the din of the falling water. Looking up into the dazzling vault of the sky I caught sight of what was at first no bigger than a speck high overhead. I lay close in my shelter hardly so much as moving a muscle, so tense was my eagerness to see the great bird, and hoping with all my heart to escape discovery by its keen eye. Alas, I was not one of the noble army of camera-fiends in those days, so that I must trust to words to paint a picture of what I was soon to see! Suddenly the speck dropped downwards, taking two or three wide circles and growing larger every moment. Then down it came sheer, gripping in its pitiless talons something still struggling vainly to escape, till it alighted on a spot within a few yards from my hiding-place. To my deep delight I found that to all appearances I was quite unobserved by the kingly creature, so that I

was able to watch every movement closely and exactly. When the royal bird was almost on the ground his wings seemed to stretch to the width of almost six feet: when he had folded them around his sturdy body he appeared to stand almost three feet above the ground. To me, at least, it was a wonderful sight, so utterly unlike most of the pictures in books, even when illustrated by such experts as the brothers Kearton.

My heart beat fast with keen excitement, such as I have rarely or perhaps never felt before or since. Nor was I entirely unmoved by fear: one blow of those wide wings could have broken my arm, as easily as I could snap a dry twig. One stab of that ruthless beak might have blinded me for ever, for birds of prey when taken at advantage often attack the eyes first. But I lay still in my hard covert, hardly daring to breathe or move an eyelid, while I grasped my heavy blackthorn tightly, kept my eyes wide open and my mind at its furthest stretch of attention. It was a male bird just emerged from the moulting season and in fine plumage, deeply brown, with his tail slightly white-barred beneath, while his golden head and breast shone vividly in the lustrous light. His beak was bright yellow at the base, but horn-coloured throughout the rest of its length, his talons were dull yellow, his sturdy legs were brown and feathered from end to end. His hazel eves flashed fearless glances around him: little did he know that a human observer was lurking so close to him, nor perhaps would he have greatly cared, had he known. From that time I have been convinced that birds of prey, which do not feed on carrion, have no very keen sense of smell, but trust to their sight in taking their quarry.

In his mighty talons he held a hare not yet dead, caught from whence I know not, for hares are not abundant in that barren region. First of all with a sudden sharp blow he beat out what little life was left in his prey, which ceased to struggle in a few seconds. It was a deeply interesting but supremely gruesome sight to watch how carefully he cut the flesh from the bones with a skill barely matched in the dissecting-room, and devoured it in gobbets with some of the skin clinging to them. Gradually the whole of the hare except a portion of the skin and a white dismal-looking skeleton disappeared. How long he took to finish his banquet I cannot tell, for I was too deeply interested to take out my watch: but to me the time flew along almost unperceived with so strange a spectacle before my eyes. I was too eager to miss nothing of that gruesome feast to think of anything besides. I never felt the hardness of the rock, nor was I conscious of my cramped posture. All my desire was to see, and I saw.

The eagle went on ravenously, as if he had not eaten for a long time, as may well have been the fact, for these birds of prey do not always succeed in getting daily food. His savagery taught the fidelity of Tennyson's description of one side of wild life in the famous words "Nature red in tooth and claw." It is, however, well to remember the remark of that king of naturalists, W. H. Hudson, on the other side, who says that there is much happiness in nature and the moments of fear and pain are short and soon forgotten, if the hunted creature lives. When the eagle had torn the last shred of flesh from the carcase and finished his ghoulish meal, he paused, looking round him without a trace of that nervous apprehension which is so seldom absent from the eves of the smaller birds. For a time he sat quite still save for an occasional quivering of his feathers and a quick turn of his supple neck. Then something like a film appeared to steal over his bright eyes, and a convulsive choking to stir in his full throat. He looked like an emperor on the point of delivering himself under the incontrollable influence of sea-sickness. Then bit by bit he disgorged such of the fur of the hapless hare, as he had chanced to swallow in rounded

pellets of considerable size.

This curious process seemed to occupy him almost as long a time as it had taken him to devour his prey, and was certainly more singular, while it was accompanied by a strange sound not unlike the subdued coughing of the immortal "snapping turtle" of Bon Gaultier with Slingsby inside of him at the bottom of the lake. When it was over the magnificent bird began to preen himself: with one mighty shake he settled down his feathers, here and there spotted with blood. He might have intended to take an afterdinner nap in the glowing sunshine; but he was destined to hear "a fearful summons." Suddenly a noisier shriek pierced the quiet air, coming from the direction of Glenveagh near the hollow eaten out by the torrent which streams down into the calmer river. It was his mate calling to him in her own heartthrilling tongue. Instantly he lifted his stately head, and turning in the direction from which the shriek had sounded he made ready to fly. Leaping upon a huge richly lichened boulder that his long wings might not beat the ground, slowly and leisurely he fanned the air with great rustling flaps. At length he rose toward the sky and began to move ever more and more swiftly, until he reached a dizzy height, from which he looked scarcely bigger than a soaring Then after taking his bearings he dropped down with amazing swiftness to the trysting-place with his mate, and I saw him no more for a season.

Slowly and not a little stiffly I rose from my long watching: nor did I recover my wonted suppleness for some time. But I cared not a jot for that: I had seen one of the supreme sights of my life. There in the heart of those desolate and lonely mountains, where the foot of man seldom strays, I had seen the golden eagle in his chosen dwelling. I had watched him revelling in his savage meal, and observed the disgorging of matter which might well have choked

him, had he not rid himself of it by his peculiar method. Evening was beginning to draw slowly on, that long summer evening which hardly ever darkens into night, when I began to take my way to my distant inn. The sun was sloping slowly to the west, dyeing the wide ocean with rose and amber, purple and gold. Clouds flaming with the glory of departing day spread their ever-changing mantle across the vault of heaven. The higher mountains were faintly tinged with fading rose on their summits, deepening into dark purple shadows along their precipitous sides. Tory Island was bathed in glowing crimson fringed with a light flame colour like the blaze of a

smithy-fire.

The weary birds of the moorland were betaking themselves to safe shelters from the dangers of the night. The Dunlewey lakes flamed like the seas of an elfin paradise, till deep into the distant ocean plunged the sun, leaving the topmost peaks of Errigal, the round dome of Slieve Snacht and the long back of Muckish still rosy with his last beams. It was a steep descent by the other side of Dooish into the valley: there was a wide expanse of russet bog, to say nothing of a shallow stream, to be crossed, before the road could be reached, and no small care was needful to escape from the pitfalls of the way. But I cared not for the toil of the journey, nor the treacherous surface of the soft bog, though it was by no means easy to find a solid footing in any part of it. Not even the stream troubled me, though it proved deeper than I had imagined and I had to hunt long for stepping-stones to help me to cross it. My soul was filled with the grandeur of the solitary scene: but that was not all, the more wondrous light of memory poured its radiance within me, which lent wings to my feet and strength to my weary body. I forgot all about fatigue, though I had tramped many miles already and more lay in front of me.

I had seen something never to be forgotten, until

memory itself fades into "dull forgetfulness." I had seen the golden eagle in his dauntless freedom at last: should I ever see him again? I could not hope ever to see him at such close quarters or so happily employed: but it was my fortune to see the same bird, as I firmly believe, once again, and to see his mate during that vagrom tramp through the highlands and hollows of County Donegal. At length I reached the stream, and found the stepping-stones, when a vivid flash of orange, blue and green changing into one another darted before my eyes and a shrill call rang in my ears. It was that loveliest of British birds the kingfisher, the fishing of which I had interrupted by my unlooked for and unwelcome appearance. The gay bird was no sooner seen than gone; after lingering a few moments by the stream in the vain hope of having another peep at him, I was forced to move forward and climb the steep bank which lay in front of me, and brought me out opposite a path leading to two farms near the margin of Altan Lough.

When I had succeeded in reaching the road I lighted upon a side-car going in my direction; willingly I accepted the invariable offer of a lift by the way. The driver asked me if I had seen the eagle, as he had reason to believe that the pair had come down from Slieve-a-Tooey to visit their old nesting-place. I told him what I had seen, and he was deeply interested, though he remarked concerning the hare, "The divvle seize him! What was he after doing with a hare?" He had been a gamekeeper on the Glenveagh estate, and once he had been let down from above to rob the eagle's nest, many years before. But the parent-birds had made so vigorous a defence of their callow chicks, that he had been forced to shout to those above to haul him up with all speed out of danger. As he was swinging in the air, having lost such footing as there was on the steep rocks, the pair had wheeled round him shrieking fiercely and even brushed him with their wide wings, so that he had been in imminent peril of his life.

In this way we trotted briskly along the winding road, he to the fine hotel at Gweedore, I to my humbler but not less comfortable hostelry at Crolly Bridge. We soon passed the handsome Catholic Chapel of Dunlewey, which was then along with that at Derrybeg under the charge of the once famous agitator Father MacFadden. So obnoxious was he to the British government, that Inspector Martin determined to take him dead or alive. With wonderful folly on the part of one who ought to have known the ways of the Irish better, he went one Sunday to the Chapel of Derrybeg to take the priest just as he was coming out after having celebrated High Mass. The Inspector had drawn his cutlass and was brandishing it in his right hand, while he laid hold of Father MacFadden's collar with his left. Irish crowd thought that he was about to cut down their beloved priest, and fell upon him with their blackthorns. Father MacFadden escaped into the priest's house, while the unfortunate officer was beaten to death. Had he had the wisdom to check the throng, he might have saved the life of the Inspector and escaped arrest himself.

The driver told me with the most solemn assurance of its truth, that an old man living near Cashelnagore, a few days before the murder took place, had had a dream in which he saw the Police Inspector battered and dying outside the Chapel of Derrybeg. This dream had been taken down by one of the priests, and either by coincidence or some other unknown means had reached a most remarkable fulfilment. Just as he had done his tale, I saw him look quickly towards the Chapel door; then he touched his hat with deep reverence not unmixed with fear. "Sure it's his riverence," was all that he said. Glancing in the same direction I saw a little wiry-looking man

in clerical garb, wearing a venerable silk hat which had seen weather of every kind, and entering the door for the beautiful "Benediction Service." His features were distinctly of the Milesian type with a remarkably firm mouth, and his hair was long and white. I have seldom seen a stronger face, though it could hardly be called pleasant, and I could picture him defying the government and the law with

equal determination.

Though something of a rebel, he was a man of singular eloquence and a model parish priest. One of his most useful habits was the war which he made upon the numerous "shebeens" opened for illicit drinking, which he would enter, blackthorn in hand. If the "boys" refused to guit the place at his command, he would drive them out with his blackthorn; if the proprietor ventured to protest, the undaunted little priest would forthwith "lick him out of his own house." What is more, when the culprit came to Confession, he would receive such a penance as made him hesitate to disobey ecclesiastical authority in the future. To the sick and the poor, like many another of his order in the west of Ireland. Father MacFadden was a constant and kind friend. stinting himself to feed the hungry. After the terrible tragedy at Derrybeg he was sent abroad for some years by his Church, which seldom falls short of the "wisdom of the serpent," however little it may usually achieve the "guilelessness of the dove." But he had returned to his parishioners, who loved him well, in time for me to see him, and to their supreme content. "May the holy Virgin and the Saints bless him!"

These were the last words of the driver, as he bade me good evening at the turn of the road leading to Crolly Bridge, where I got down truly grateful for my lift of four miles Irish and expressing my gratitude in a tangible form well understood all the world over. Soon I was seated before a plain but

comfortable meal excellently served, and I was able to forget what I had seen in the immediate joy of ham and eggs with solid and liquid sundries. When I had done and taken out my evening pipe, I began to think of the eagle and the priest. It was a fitting crown to the adventure of the day to have seen that earnest patriot as he believed himself to be, that traitorous rebel as he was called in the English newspapers of a certain type. Having heard the story told much as the events actually happened, I came to the conclusion, that while Inspector Martin was wrong in attempting to arrest a priest just after the most solemn service of his Church, Father MacFadden was no less wrong in not preventing his deeply attached flock from committing that exceptionally brutal murder. So I came to the conclusion of the Right Honourable Joseph Addison, on the occasion whereon he made his only speech in the House of Commons, "There's much to be said on both sides," though from any point of view the murder was indefensible.

I retired early to bed; but I slept uneasily, and was visited by horrid dreams, in which the eagle and the priest were inextricably mixed up, their one point of unanimity being a positive hostility to myself. Consequently I rose at dawn and went to look at the trout in the Crolly river while my breakfast was being made ready. I had no tackle with me, else I could not have refrained from whipping the stream, wherein I caught sight of more than one plump fish rising to the natural fly in a manner alike delightful and tantalizing. There was one particularly deep pool, which seemed to be the chosen preserve of a grandfather trout into which he would suffer no others to enter. I could not get a footing to try the old poacher's trick of "tickling," though not quite unaccustomed to its joys on a suitable occasion. So I was fain to lick my disappointed lips and return to my breakfast at the inn, which consisted of the trout

I had had no means of taking, but which had fallen

victims to the skill of my landlord.

By easy stages I took my journey to the southern part of the county, and in due time found myself lodged at the pleasant hostelry at Carrick on the land side of the great cliff of Slieve Liag. Alas! that comfortable hotel with its happy company of government officials constantly changing as each succession went about their business, is closed now! Though he did not stay in it, Lord Leighton came to this place when he was painting his picture of "Andromeda." He wished to see cliffs in their most majestic form, and he was not disappointed. The memory of his genial and graceful presence was long remembered in the neighbouring villages, and the older men loved to tell of his stately courtesy and his unfeigned kindness of heart. To the same spot came Sir Noel Paton for a similar purpose, though he was engaged in painting his picture of "The Temptation." He had less reason for his visit than his fellow-artist, unless indeed he wished to see what a real wilderness was like. That he could find within a stone's-throw from the hotel in all of the land which stretches from Carrick to Malinmore on the one side and Glencolumbkille on the other. Here there was, and is indeed, a wilderness sparingly dotted over with farms and cottages, and memorable for several cromlechs of the largest size and two prehistoric forts.

Soon after my arrival I made ready to climb Slieve Liag by the shortest, and it must be admitted neither the safest nor the easiest way. I had often heard of the "One Man's Path," and I was determined to cross its razor-like edge to the broad eastern summit of the "mountain," as it is always called in the neighbourhood. Leaving the little fishing-station of Teelin Port on my left after a long trudge between broken rocks I found myself at Bunglass. Here a narrow stretch of turf sloping downwards towards the sea,

SLIEVE LIAG



crowns the crags of a little headland opposite to the greater cliff, rising to a height of eleven hundred feet above the glassy green waters, and pillared upon almost perpendicular rocks. The inlet towards the east is ominously and with too good reason known as the "Lair of the Whirlwinds," within which cross currents of air often meet and result in terrific storms. The cliff which hems it in gradually rises to a height of nearly two thousand feet. For the most part it is inclined at an angle of about sixty degrees; but here and there it is quite perpendicular, while over the great hollow in the rocks called the "Eagles' Nest," the white crags hang threateningly, as if a mere puff of the wind might hurl them head-

long into the surging deep.

Near the edge of the Bunglass cliff is a so-called "Druid's Altar," though I strongly suspect no Druid ever set eyes upon it, which serves as a useful seat to the profane traveller who has come to feast his eyes upon the sublime prospect in front of him. There towers the stupendous cliff in all the majesty of its appalling height and extending for nearly two miles in length. I sat and gazed my fill upon the truly awful and soul-inspiring scene. The sun was shining with full morning splendour lighting up every crevice of the huge mass of time-worn rock. Every shade of colour blended into one another over the rugged surface. Wherever the native white flagstones showed themselves, they shone like patches of new-fallen snow darkened here and there with faint blue shadows. Big tufts of heather hung over the edge and wandered down the mighty buttresses, stooping down as if to catch the booming music of the waters, as they chanted their immemorial song in the depths far beneath. Green, orange, living gold, silver grey, fiery red, burnished bronze, glittering alabaster, steely blue, melted into one another forming a perfect harmony of many exquisite tints.

The waters moving calmly on the inflowing tide shone deeply blue, fringed with lines of white foam, darkly green where they rolled over the narrow belt of sand, and fading westward into the paler blue of the sky. In one spot they were so still that the huge cliff was mirrored in their transparent depths. Thousands of sea-gulls broke the solitary stillness with their piercing clamour: they looked like tiny white butterflies as they floated in mid-air over their swaying home. A fishing boat with its brown sail filled with a favouring wind stole along past the towering crags. It looked smaller than a schoolboy's toy boat and the heads of the crew seemed no bigger than black dots on the clean deck. that little boat brought with it a sense of companionship, though it was moving so far below. It may have been taking some adventurous visitors to the caves, which honeycomb certain parts of the mountain, wherein the true maiden-hair grows and the colours of the vaulted roof baffle description. But it soon disappeared round one of the steep buttresses, and the sense of solitude returned with renewed power.

It was long before I could tear myself away from that wonderful vision of rugged grandeur blended with gentle loveliness. On one of the less abrupt slopes I caught sight of a patch of green grass with a lavender haze of many hair-bells trembling over it. Close to it was a line of trickling water dancing down to the tossing waves. Near by were the "precipices," which were appalling in their savage horror, lined in some places by the rusty red of inaccessible iron ore. But I had made up my mind to go upward; the way was long and hard, there was no time for loitering below, and upward I went. The track, if track it may be called, to the "One Man's Path" lay along part of the "Lair of Whirlwinds" amid heather and bents, scattered over with broken rocks of every kind and size. Nor

did it take long to reach the path, which is no easy climb and needs a steady head and a sound heart; but if no wind blows seaward, there is little positive danger, though it was told me to encourage me before I set out, that the last wild goat had been

blown into the sea from this very ridge.

The path winds along the edge of the huge cliffs passing near the precipices, where the white rocks literally overhang the heaving waters. Next comes a serrated ridge dropping sheer on its seaward flank and falling landward to a little reedy tarn in the hollow of the mountain. The ridge itself may be about two feet in breadth, and in one part bears a close resemblance to two teeth of a gigantic saw. Here a firm and steady footfall is essential; but when it has once been crossed the way grows easier. In former days it was the only path into the heart of the county from Malinmore and Malinbeg, and many a doughty wayfarer might be seen marching fearlessly across it in the olden time. From the eastern to the western summit a similar ridge runs, but its slopes are neither so precipitous, nor is the path itself so narrow. From its height there is just a glimpse of one of the tarns hidden in the bosom of the great mountain, haunted as usual by the great eel-horse, or even by the terrible Phouca itself, that magic horse which snatches up an unwilling rider and after sweeping him through the air casts him down to die upon some yawning precipice.

Such was the path which I chose for my first ascent of Slieve Liag, or the "mountain of white flagstones," and I was richly rewarded. There is an undoubted pleasure in conquering dangerous places, from which more timid spirits with greater wisdom start back. When I had overcome the serious difficulties of the journey, I sat down to rest on the greensward some hundreds of feet above the "Eagles' Nest," where the great birds in former

times had been accustomed to build their sprawling nursery between crags at least fifteen hundred feet above the whitening breakers. Donegal Bay stretched in front in its serene beauty, peaceful as an Alpine lake and to the full as deeply blue. The dark line of ragged cliffs between Ballina and the Stags of Broadhaven scarred its southern shore: beyond them rose the mountains of Mayo with the bare crown and side turrets of Croagh Patrick faintly seen in the distance towering over Westport Harbour, and Nephin their king standing above the russet bog like a pointed blue blot against the paler

sky.

To the east lay Sligo, hidden behind Rosse's Point, and the rounded knob of Knocknarea surmounted by the "Misgaun na Meave" or the "butterbasket of Meave," so called from that masculine Queen of Connaught, though the great cairn with its lower circumference of six hundred feet and its height of sixty is more probably the burial-place of the mightier chieftains who fell at the prehistoric battle of North Moytura. Beyond stretched the straight limestone ridge of Benbulben, and far off in the sea the tiny island of Inismurray with its primeval ruins and sacred associations lay sleeping quietly in the sunlight, dreaming, it may be, of its illustrious past. To the north stretched an undulating waste of desolate brown bog ending in the Slieve-a-Tooey range, above which shone the forked peak of Errigal and the round knob of Slieve Snacht white as the snow-clad Alps. Then I turned southward once more, and gazed downward into the darkling depths of the "Lair of Whirlwinds," where all was calm and still now, though it had been hewn out by the fury of innumerable storms. I thought of the story which I had heard in a distant cottage, which Dr. MacDevitt had told with more dramatic fullness in his guide-book to his native county. I will set it down as I heard it from the lips of one who was convinced of its absolute truth

in every detail.

Father Carr and his clerk Owen had been entertained by a hospitable farmer in Malinbeg and intended to pass the night in safety with him. But the bright moonlight roused the brave priest, and vielding to some irresistible prompting within him, he bade Owen saddle his pony and accompany him towards Kilcar. No manner of persuasion would induce him to alter his resolution; so the two set out over the mountain path till they came to Slieve Liag itself looking black and grim in the shadow. The priest turned his head to look at the "Lair of the Whirlwinds" and said quietly to Owen. "Owen, my man, there will be a storm soon, but the holy angels will guard us." The clerk strove in vain to persuade him to turn back; his only answer was, "The holy angels will guard us." On they went, when there was a sudden stir in the waters beneath them, and the priest exclaimed, "It's coming sure enough, Owen, look at the wind rising like a giant. But the holy angels will guard us!" Nearer and nearer the black whirlwind came, moving slantwise, rending solid rocks and bearing on its rude breast huge pieces of white flagstone, as if they had been tufts of thistle-down.

The two started back to the bare moorland to find such shelter as they could; but it seemed as if the storm-fiend would snatch them even there. On it whirled and roared in its slanting course, when its path was suddenly changed by a spur in the rock and it vanished into night, as swiftly as it had arisen. Father Carr turned with a cheerful face to his clerk, "Said I not, Owen, my man, that the holy angels would guard us? The winds have spent their force, there'll be no more storms to-night." "Let us get on then, your reverence," answered the clerk overjoyed like the priest at their unexpected deliverance from imminent peril. Father Carr was

just on the point of bidding his pony move forward, when a deep groan was heard as it seemed from beneath their feet. He stopped and glancing down at the sea still tossing fiercely in the wake of the vanished storm he said, "Owen, that's the groan of some poor body cast on the cliffs down yonder. I can see the broken masts of an unhappy wrecked ship. Maybe he's dying upon the rocks and that without absolution: I'm going down to help him."

Owen vainly combated his resolution, and received the same answer as before, "The holy angels will guard us, Owen, my man!" Piously and with deep earnestness the clerk turned the words into a prayer, as he saw Father Carr set out on his perilous undertaking. Down and down the faithful priest clambered, making sure of every foothold and marking the way for his return. He had been a bold climber in his day, so that he was able to take his journey in safety through a thousand dangers. At length he reached a low promontory jutting out into the boiling waves, but always keeping a narrow shelf above their savage fury. On this the ship had struck; all on board had gone down save one, and he, a Spaniard, lay dying upon the rocky shelf with none to tend him, as he thought, none to say a pitying word. When he opened his throbbing eyes he saw the priest kneeling by his side, who like many another of his order had been educated in Spain and was able to speak to the sufferer in his own tongue. The dving Spaniard sobbed out his last confession, telling how he had lived an evil life, but had been kept from utter perdition by a little prayer, which his mother had taught him in early childhood. This he had repeated over and over again, before Father Carr had found him.

Round his waist was a girdle containing a large sum of gold, which he begged the priest to take and have Masses said for his soul. Father Carr

gave him absolution; the moment the last words left his lips the Spaniard passed peacefully away. The good priest, who had hazarded his life to comfort another, took the heavy girdle and began to climb the steep cliff-face once more. He could hear the water boiling beneath him with a pitiless tumult; he could see the rugged rocks above him and on either side. But never a thought of fear moved his strong spirit, and when Owen had given him up for lost his cheerful face appeared on the brow of the mountain. The faithful clerk almost leaped for joy when he saw him safe and sound once more. Again his answer was, "Said I not, Owen, my man, the holy angels would guard us?" Then the good priest told his clerk all that he had seen and done; at the same time he showed him the girdle heavy with gold. By this time day was breaking calm and still; the two crossed the "One Man's Path " without difficulty and took their way to Kilcar, which they reached in safety and thankfulness.

In after years Father Carr caused a church to be built with the money taken from the girdle, which lies ruined by the side of the old road from Carrick to Kilcar, and is known to this day by the name of "The Spaniard's Church." I have seen the venerable ruin more than once, and the only doubt in my own mind is whether the church is not of an older date than the story. However that may be, it is a beautiful story, which may well be true in essence, as the slope of the cliff down which Father Carr climbed is quite possible for anyone who is a trained climber. Let no sceptical traveller dare to hint a doubt of its truth amongst the inhabitants of the neighbourhood, lest he be scouted as a heretic and unbeliever, if indeed he fare no worse at their hands. The Irish are tenacious of their traditions, which they hand down from parent to child and keep firmly fixed in their memory. Nor does the story grow so much by continual repetition, as is usual in such matters. Even in the more ancient legends the main details remain constant, and I have heard the same tradition told by many tellers in almost the same words.

Just behind me and close to the precipices stood the scanty remains of the cells and oratory of two old Irish Saints, Hugh McBracken and Asic, who retired into this savage spot to lead the bare life of hermits. Of the first little is known; but the second was a disciple of St. Patrick, who made him Bishop of Elphin. In some transaction with an unconverted Irishman he is said to have uttered an unwitting falsehood, after which he could not endure to face his flock. Time and again they came to seek him, but he refused to return with them. The ruined oratory, a tiny cave, an unroofed dwelling and a well may still be seen on the spot. I saw no traces of the bed of either Saint, which would be nothing more than a not over flat stone, so little did these early Irish votaries consider the comfort of their bodies. It was more than a little startling, not to say repulsive, to me to find by the side of the well a marmalade-jar of the ubiquitous Keiller, still used by the faithful as a drinking-cup. Before the consecration of the "Holy Glen" by the foundation of a monastery and residence of St. Columba there, hundreds of pilgrims found their way over the "One Man's Path" to the relics of these two ancient Saints.

The outlook was bright and majestic enough when I stood near the ruined hermitage; but to picture it in a storm passes human words. In very truth these reverend penitents chose a place for meditation far enough away from the busy haunts of men and the continual tumults of daily life, where they could be face to face with Nature in all her aspects, from the smiling beauty of a summer evening to the awful sublimity of a winter hurricane. But pilgrims

rarely attempt the dangerous journey to do them honour and to pray for their blessing. Only the curious visitor disturbs their rest, while the timid sheep and nimble goats profane the ruined shrines, where a patch of brighter verdure points to past cultivation. There I sat with the splendour of living nature around me and the ruined memorials of the hallowed dead behind me to recall in my thoughts the long-past times, when Ireland was famed throughout Europe for her learning and piety but a little time after this pair of world-wearied hermits came hither to survey earth and

ocean in their mighty magnificence.

I turned once more to the sea, then creeping cautiously along the edge I looked down into the recess, where once had been the "Eagles' nest." My eye ranged along the cliff, when I saw movement in what I had taken to be one of its smaller projections. Instantly I drew back and sought a place from which I could watch without danger, if I should make an incautious movement. had my reward: once again I saw the golden eagle spreading his broad wings to the quiet air. He had come to the spot from which one of his kindred, perhaps a far-off ancestor, is said to have carried off a child from the brow of the mountain to be the prey of his fierce nestlings. Those who saw the theft fell on their knees and prayed with all the fervour of their Irish hearts, as the mighty bird holding the babe in his talons flew ever seaward. It seemed at first as if he would never come back, but the true men and women never ceased praying for a moment. At last the eagle turned and sailed back to his nest bearing his precious quarry, which he placed by the side of his nestlings and their dam.

That moment the wild figure of a woman was seen rushing straight to the edge of the cliff: she looked as if she had lost her wits and as if she were going to hurl herself down into the sea. The rest would

have stayed her, but nothing short of a violence which they were unwilling to offer, could have held her back. It was the distracted mother, who by the wonderful love in her heart was able to find her way down to the huge nest. The eagles shrieked and would have driven her back, but something in her wild eyes awed them and they took to flight over the wide waters. Folding her skirt around her shoulders, she secured her babe within it, and once more scaled the precipitous crag in perfect safety, at the top of which she found her friends still on their knees, still praying earnestly. She soon lost her wild look, and pressing her recovered child to her breast she too sank on her knees and offered up her prayers of thankfulness. I had heard the story told over the blue peat-smoke in a cabin; I had seen the child long since grown into a woman old and grey. When I saw the great bird floating beneath me, my mind flew back at once to the kindly man who had welcomed me to his home with a ducal courtesy and told the tale, which to him was the very truth.

I had now seen the eagle from beneath and from almost a level with myself: but this was the first time that I had ever looked down upon his majestic flight. The sight was entrancing: the ease with which he spread his huge wings, the grace with which they bore him across the wild inlet, were marvellous to behold. He may have been pursuing some quarry unperceived by me, some hapless bird which had excited his thirst for prey; for his very presence caused a heart-rending clamour amongst the seamews, while the scarts fled precipitately from their accustomed perch, uttering their harsh croaks in noisy discords. He may have been simply sunning himself in the warm glow of the summer day. He may have been haunted with a longing to revisit the eyrie from which he himself had sprung in the distant past, for the age of eagles is patriarchal amongst birds. But there he was almost directly beneath me, now clinging to the rugged cliffs with his crooked talons, flapping his wings as he clung, now sailing leisurely from side to side. Once and once only he uttered his cruel cry, at the very sound of which a cloud of lesser birds fled with noisy alarm and headlong speed to seek a safer harbourage.

The next moment he was gone: one by one the other birds returned to their wonted play; the scarts took up their station on a projecting ridge diving by turns, as one or the other caught sight of fish with their keen eyes; the gulls sailed through the air or rested on the gently heaving waters, and the shrill "jack, jack!" of the jackdaws could be heard plainly far down the western face of the cliff. I turned my steps to the easier "Pilgrims' Way," which leads down the summit, passing a quarry deeply hidden in the heart of the mountain. Just as I was beginning to descend, I caught sight of a little clump of low-growing white-petalled golden-centered flowers smiling in delicate loveliness. In my ignorance I thought them to be nothing more than blanched blooms of the burnet-rose, which grows always near the sea. But something unusual in their appearance attracted my closer attention, and examining them more minutely I found that each one of them had eight petals, or three more than are found in the flowers of any of our native wild roses. I knew then that I had lighted upon one of the least common of our wild plants, the mountain dryas (Dryas octopetala), and I rejoiced over so happy a discovery with the unsophisticated ardour of the youthful botanist.

As I was carefully picking one or two specimens to be added to my herbarium, I saw something of a light green colour trembling in the breeze on the edge of the cliff. It was some little way down towards the sea; so lying at full length I reached over and took into my hand for the first time several fronds of the true maidenhair (Adiantum capillus-Veneris). I have

seen that dainty fern more than once since in the lonelier parts of western Ireland. But the first finding of its exquisite fronds was precious to me, and lingers fondly in my memory. As I lay on the greensward looking down into the "wrinkled sea" crawling beneath, I found the sight so fascinating that I could not easily wrench myself away from it. The movement was so rhythmical, the colouring so radiantly bright, the hoarse clamour of the distant waves sounded so drowsily musical, so musically drowsy. Nor could I help thinking of the hapless Spaniard wrecked on that rocky face so long ago, and despairing of ever hearing the sound of a human voice again. I seemed to see the whirlwind staggering along its tempestuous path, the gallant ship caught in its greedy maw, the brief struggle, the scattering of its timbers on the jutting crag. seemed to see Father Carr climbing carefully down to the battered human hulk on the narrow ledge, to hear his kind voice repeating the last rites of his Church. Then I drew cautiously back from the verge and began my homeward way.

It was now the beginning of sunset and the flaming light shone upon the wild and desolate-looking landscape before me with its occasional cabins and little potato-patches glimmering here and there. The brown undulating wastes just crimsoned by the fast sinking sunbeams with their two black pools stretched towards Glen Head and Slieve-a-Tooey, the last haunt of the golden eagle, if indeed he can be found there any longer. In the far distance the tapering peak of Errigal and the broader summit of Slieve Snacht stood out against the richly coloured sky tinged with a wonderfully delicate rosy hue. Farther towards the south-west lay the Atlantic "like an infant asleep" here exquisitely blue, there lighted up into flashes of a dazzling radiance, there again flushed with deep purple and vivid yellow. To the east the long cape of Muckros Point stretched far out into the sea dyed with a deep orange colour. Beyond it lay St. John's Point near Killybegs adorned in

living gold.

In front frowned another Aghla deep in shadow, the one which towers above Lough Fin, in whose recesses is a lonely tarn said to be the home of a weird monster half horse, half gigantic eel. This lake-horse makes persistent appearances in Irish folklore: it is said to haunt one of the tarns of Slieve Liag, as has been already noted; indeed almost every lonely tarn is said to be one of the places of its dwelling. Nor are there wanting those who positively affirm that they have seen it. To deny its existence is a waste of breath: the informant will reply, "Sure and does your honour think that I would be telling you a lie?" To that pertinent question there is no satisfactory answer, indeed any answer implying doubt is apt to give serious offence. For myself I have never been so fortunate as to set eyes upon the mysterious monster, perhaps because my imagination is too limited, perhaps because I am not the seventh son of a seventh son, perhaps because I was not born under the right planet. But then I have never seen or heard anything out of the common at spiritualistic séances, so that my judgment is not worthy of any confidence.

Far to the east the Blue Stack Mountains cut the clear air, their red granite mass deeply purpled in the sunset and the subduing light of distance. Nearer again was Inver towards the head of Donegal Bay, where twelve feet beneath the surface of the bog a primitive log-built sleeping-hut of two stories was unearthed by the turf-cutters at their laborious toil. A model of it and the wild scene of its discovery may be seen in the museum of the Royal Irish Academy in Dublin, which contains a most remarkable and varied collection of prehistoric relics. In the dark valley immediately in front, now fired by the glories of the sinking sun, the men of old had

fought their relentless battles, and laid their heroic dead under the huge cromlechs, some of which still remain in the neighbourhood of the Cloughmore. In those earlier days the bog would be covered with fir-trees, the bare roots of which still pierce the surface of the peat, and many wild animals, including the broad-horned elk, had their home in the woodland or

rocky caves.

Reluctantly I left the breezy summit with its hermitages and holy well, took my road along the "Pilgrims' Way" and dropped easily down to the northern margin of Teelin Port. To the left was a tiny streamlet rippling beneath a fairy forest of the royal fern (Osmunda regalis); to the right was the muddy shore of the little inlet left as high and dry as might be by the retiring tide. The dark sand was cut by the narrow salmon-stream, which cleft its winding way through rushes and saltwort to the open sea. On the farther side of the stream an object in the distance bearing some resemblance to a big bird arrested my attention, and I drew near stepping as silently as a cat upon hunting intent. The road was lifted a good height above the muddy beach to avoid the rare floods of stormy weather, so that I was well able to see, though the mud prevented me from crossing over to the margin of the river. Once more, and for the last time, I saw the golden eagle, but not the same bird as I had seen before. This one was a shade darker in the plumage, though fired along the back by the ruddy evening light, nor was the golden hue of the head and neck so clearly marked. It was considerably larger than the other, and at first I fancied that it was the sea eagle, so that I looked carefully for the white tail, which is its distinguishing mark. But I found on closer observation that it was the female of the golden eagle and almost certainly the mate of the bird which I had seen flying along the face of Slieve Liag.

I could not get near enough to see exactly what she

was doing, for she was parted from me by about fifty yards of clinging mud, which was all but impassable and well able to draw my boots from my feet, if I made the attempt. To my sorrow I had not taken my field-glass with me, both on account of the difficulty of the climb and because at that time my distance-sight was so strong, that I was apt to trust to its unaided power. I stood as still as was possible for a peculiarly restless human being with my eyes fixed upon her: as far as I could judge from the turn and quick movements of her head and neck she was performing some of the mysteries of her feminine toilet. She may just have finished taking a bath after the manner of her kind in the salmonstream, which was comparatively shallow at that wind in its course, and been drying herself in the warm glow of the declining sun. Eagles of her kind do not usually prey upon fish, nor have I heard of one devouring an otter, of which many appear from time to time in the stream. Nor was there any other kind of bird or beast suitable to her appetite in the habit of haunting that portion of the brawling river.

I could have stood where I was for a long time, but night was beginning to fall and like that of honest "Louis Kerneguy" I found "my stomach clamouring cupboard," so that I had to leave her perched in perfect safety under the rigorous protection of the landowner of the district. Thus I had seen the pair of Jove's birds throbbing with the fullness of their free life and "seeking their meat from God." Nor can I ever forget the wonder of that sight, so long as memory sits firmly upon her throne. It may be that my feelings will seem extravagant to those who are familiar with the great bird, or to those who esteem it a matter of good breeding to take the faintest possible interest in anything however uncommon. Be that as it may, that sight remains and will remain as one of the chief events of my life, which stands out over many others hardly less unusual in its deep interest and its fierce grandeur. Keen bird-lover as I have always been and closely attentive to the habits and movements of birds of every kind, I have never seen anything quite like the ferocious feeding of the male

bird, and the dignified repose of his mate.

Before I left County Donegal I made up my mind to visit the last nesting-place of the golden eagle within its boundaries, the lonely and not easily accessible peak of Slieve-a-Tooey, which frowns over the narrow and wildly grand inlet of Loughros Beg. Whoever would see the full magnificence of that awe-inspiring scene must take a stout boat with a careful crew and a good captain, and row leisurely along under the precipitous cliffs. The voyage, which is best made from Dawros, is one of marvellous sublimity from beginning to end; but it is attended by so many risks that few undertake it. Only when the experienced captain notes the sea breaking with gentlest force upon Loughros Point will he pilot any by the side of that perilous coast. The comfortable Dawros Bay Hotel is now a thing of the past, which occupied the summer residence of a former recorder of Cork. It was my starting-point more than twenty years ago, and I had to delay my journey for five days before what the captain called "a flat sea" was attainable and the voyage could be taken with comparative though not even then certain safety.

There are about ten miles of cliffs varying from four hundred to fourteen hundred feet in height, cut into a thousand fantastic shapes. When the sun shines on them their colours are as varied and gorgeous as the fairest fabric wrought on some choice Indian loom, and infinitely brighter. As they front the north, it is best to see them near sunrise or sunset, at which times in the distance they look like a pale drab broken wall rising above water of an indigo blue. But a nearer approach reveals the artistry of Nature's hand painting the bare crags with patterns as delicate as those on a butterfly's wing. Enormous

broken masses rent from their parent rock by the pitiless might of the ocean, stand straight out of the water, parted from the mainland by narrow passes and channels bordered on either side by precipitous rocks. Tens of thousands of sea-birds of many kinds rest upon them, or nestle on the restless waves, which are never at peace on the calmest day along that frightful coast. During the breeding-season in May they circle around the approaching boat, swoop down upon the rowers, and make the still air ring with their clamorous cries.

In the late summer there are fewer of them, and their courage is less fierce, though even then the thoughtful mind will wonder how so many of them can live in peace amongst the recesses of the rocks. Here may be seen a row of scarts perched on a narrow ledge like a company of Puritan divines shrouded in dark Geneva gowns. The resemblance ends with the approach of the boat, which awakes them from their dignified repose and sends them splashing into the water helter-skelter and uttering their sharp croaks. There a cloud of gulls with "wild sea-laughter" rises shrieking to the heights above. Now and then a hoodie crow with its grey flanks drops down from the towering cliffs, with that perky impudence so characteristic of its tribe. It may have seen a piece of floating carcase bobbing up and down near the shore, and been attracted thereto by an irresistible impulse. The plash of the oars and the cheerful talk of the men may even startle from hollows in the crags a flight of blue rock pigeons, if indeed they still haunt that desolate land.

The cliffs sink suddenly to the margin of the sea at a tiny inlet with two or three houses overlooking the wild waters, and bearing the august name of Port. Here a vast rounded rock known as the Tormore lifts its bare crown above the waves like a huge erratic boulder to the height of at least three hundred feet. In the season this islet is visited by

myriads of sea-birds, some of great rarity, which find a secure nesting-place within its wrinkled crags. At low tide it is possible to cross over a shelf of slippery rocks and reach its rugged flank; but the tide returns quickly and the passage is dangerous. Many of the peasantry find their way over the treacherous shoal to gather the samphire (Inula · crithmoides), which trims the steepest crevices of the cliffs with its golden flowers. They use it for some mysterious purpose in their rustic pharmacopæia and in some cases make a kind of pickle or sweatmeat of its sturdy stems. Near the shoulder of the Tormore is a little mound, upon which flowers are strewn by loving hands from time to time. It is said that a poor lad crossed over to gather the samphire and was prevented from returning by the high tides of a stormy week. Here he died of hunger; here he lies buried far from the peat-smoke of his native cabin in

unconsecrated ground.

It is impossible to convey more than a faint perception of the desolation of this terrific coast. Everywhere it bears abundant traces of the rude handiwork of the winds and the waves in their tempestuous fury at its supreme height. Whether the voyager turns his gaze towards perpendicular cliffs of Glen Head, or back again towards the primitive hamlet of Maghera, the jagged cliffs are alike sublime and terror-striking. Even in a socalled "flat sea" huge Atlantic rollers come booming in with force enough to swamp a hundred boats. Many years ago a merry party rowed in their boat and were just entering the "pass" leading into Port, keeping time to their oars with cheerful song. Amongst them was an American lady journalist who was busily engaged in taking rapid notes, which were destined never to find their way into print. Suddenly she looked up from her notebook and exclaimed with one of those detestably inappropriate adjectives dear to a certain type of feminine mind, "Oh, how pretty!" All in the boat turned their glance involuntarily to look, and the hearts of the more experienced almost died within them. They caught sight of one of those mighty breakers rolling with stupendous might past the Tormore and roaring

along irresistibly towards their frail boat.

The next moment the boat disappeared beneath the huge swell of the billow, all of them were plunged into the boiling cauldron of the waters and soon were struggling for very life. Walls of craggy rock towered above them on either hand; within less than a stone's-throw from them was the tiny basin of Port, where they would escape, could they but reach it. Ah yes, could they but reach it! But the great roller with all the force of the Atlantic behind it broke over their heads, and for a time they were one and all sunk beneath its foaming crest. The unhappy woman was lost, the weight of the water in her skirts dragged her down and did not suffer her to come to the surface for some days. At length her floating lifeless body was found by some fishermen many miles away from the scene of the tragedy. All of the men succeeded though much battered and bruised in getting safe to land, if land it could be called, which was made up of sheer cliffs and broken rocks. They tried in vain to save her; but in the end they had nothing left to them but to see to themselves.

As the story was told to me amid the awful surroundings of the disaster and the scene of every detail pointed out one after another, our excellent captain Johnnie said, "Some of them had to climb the cliff mother-naked to seek help from the people in the houses!" The tragedy was quite fresh in the minds of the neighbours for miles around Port when I made that treacherous voyage, and was able to do full justice to its painful details. From point to point Johnnie told his tale with a quiet pathos matchless in its direct simplicity. He ended up with the solemn remark uttered in a hushed tone, as if he had

no wish to wrong any of the sufferers, many of whom were then living, "They were all full of the crayter and not able to use the boat!" Like a wise man he suffered none of his crew to so much as taste a drop, until they had passed from all probable danger. The sail back towards Maghera was one of continuous interest and excitement for all lovers of the sublime; too fiercely wild perhaps for those who care most for tamer scenery trimmed by the hand of man. Throughout its length the captain kept tightly hold of the rudder, and issued his directions in a firm clear

tone which admitted of no dispute.

First we glided through a narrow strait or "pass" between Tormore Point and Tormore Island, which is the most dangerous of all those rock-bound defiles. Next we left on the leeside the three pyramidal peaks known as the "Hastings," which frown above the water to the height of a hundred and fifty feet, making our boat, though not a small one, seem like a mussel-shell manned by ants. Then a lofty and slenderly fashioned natural arch spanned the course, bearing a striking resemblance to the flying buttress of some gigantic cathedral. The span of the arch was fully fifty feet above the deep-blue waters, and nearly twenty feet wide at its widest part. In due time we reached the foot of the "Petticoat," a cliff not less than thirteen hundred feet in height, and justifying its name by its curious shape. Not far off towered the "Curtain," no less appropriately named with its vast folds of many-coloured rock. Next another of the channels lay in front, where the lofty crags were parted by a narrow "pass," over which they hung in threatening sublimity. Here there was scarcely room for the oars to ply at full stretch between the lowering sides, yet the water between them was deep enough, and that day rippled gently from the prow.

The steersman needed both exact knowledge and continual watchfulness in that gloomy spot: many a

sunken reef lay ahead, which had been the death of

more than one less experienced fisherman.

Far off to the left was "Inish Bernagh," or "Island of the Barnacle Geese," where that shyest of sea-fowl was wont to nest twenty years ago, so at at least it is said. Close at hand was perhaps the most wonderful of the long series of natural arches eaten out by the devouring tooth of the greedy waters. When we reached it, it proved to be a long, narrow, vaulted tunnel, through which the boatmen were compelled to pole, as there was no room for their bending oars. Where there was light enough to see them, every shade of rich mineral colour adorned it with Nature's perfect frescoes. The cheerful shouts of the crew as they pushed the boat onward rang through the long arch; they were doing it for the first time, and the adventure had all the charm of novelty for them no less than for me. By this means they shortened their journey to the next halting-place considerably, for the cliff projects far into the sea on its outer edge.

When we had reached the end, the light broke upon us with a suddenness which was almost dazzling, and we found ourselves in the peaceful waters of a lovely little bay. Behind us lay a wall of dark rock, through which we had just passed; in front was a crystal waterfall dropping straight into the sea from a height of nearly a hundred feet. Between was a sloping bank of vividly green grass bordered by a narrow strip of orange-tinted beach spangled with white crystalline pebbles. When I first saw that inlet with its quiet surface and its golden strand, it moved me in every fibre with a thrilling sense of its exquisite beauty. Under similar circumstances I have never seen it again, for my next visit to it was not through a tunnel of hard rock, but by an easy descent from above. Indeed, few except the fishermen, who find the rocks excellent breeding-places for lobsters, ever take that perilous voyage more than once. But it

remains a memory-picture painted in the permanent tints of abiding recollection. The boatmen tried with small effect to catch some of the water from the fall to quench their burning thirst. In the end Johnnie secured their wishes by tying a bailing-tin to the end of the boat-hook, otherwise we should soon

have been swamped by the falling water.

Yet in this lovely and lonely spot there was a notorious family of brewers of illicit whisky or "potheen." The police had heard of them, and determined to take them in the act, by the side of the waterfall. They would thus be able to secure a conviction against the culprits, and possible promotion for themselves. But great difficulties lay in their path: if they came by water their presence would be betraved before they could actually put into shore, and the men had a hiding-place in a neighbouring cave unknown to their pursuers, where they could stow their still and watch the police as they hunted them in vain. On the other hand, to reach the top of the green slope a long spongy bog had to be crossed; no easy task for the police in their heavy boots, and it was a toilsome task to climb down to the shore by the slippery slope. All things taken together the chances of escape lay always on the side of the law-breakers, who for years had succeeded in avoiding their would-be captors, and had been in the habit of supplying the cellar of more than one magistrate with their illicit drink.

One day, about thirty years ago, the men were on the strand with their still and materials, but no boat to take them into a harbour of refuge if they were chased from the land side. Suddenly the police appeared in considerable force on the top of the slope, and were so stationed that they cut off all of the usual possibilities of escape. The law-breakers were in a grave quandary, nor could the wisest amongst them tell what to do. But greatly to their relief, Johnnie's boat appeared upon the scene, and hoisting signals

of distress they begged him to take themselves and their belongings on board. He was in the employ of the government, and a man of no small consequence in those parts, and his name was well known to the police and to everyone else. For a moment he too was in a quandary, for he longed to rescue the trapped culprits, if it were by any means possible. But his name was painted in large white letters on the boat, which could be seen quite plainly by the officers of justice. Luckily for him he was out of their sight, and bethinking himself for a moment, he covered over the conspicuous name with his jacket and put on shore. He took the trembling sinners on board, and turning back the way he had come, he was soon hidden from sight by a projecting cliff. By the time that the most active of the police had reached the strand, there were indeed footprints, but there was not a trace of the boat to be seen. So they were disappointed of their prey, somewhat to the comfort of the nearest magistrate, who was thus able to procure a supply of good whisky at a small price. It may be worth noting in this connection, that "potheen," if kept long enough, becomes very mellow and palatable.

Somewhere amongst the cliffs already described from beneath, where Slieve-a-Tooey and Croagh Ballaughdown tower above them, the golden eagle was accustomed to build its nest twenty years ago. It was no light task to tramp along those crumbling crags, which tumble down precipitously into the sea. There was no path, not even a single sheep-track for the greater part of the way; only the sea-line served to guide my wandering feet, and that turned a distance of twelve miles English into twelve miles Irish, which are by no means the same thing. In the lonely recesses lay mountain tarns high above the sea, which have long been believed to be the chosen dwelling of "hobgoblins and chimæras dire." Swift rushing streams and lesser runnels poured down into the sea.

cutting deep valleys which had to be crossed, and were made up chiefly of shaking bog. The deepest of these was the last, and I soon found myself hopping from tussock to tussock in anxious search for a dubious foothold. Next a new height had to be climbed, the side of which was wet, slippery, and

sometimes crumbled under my every step.

Below boomed the sea, rolling up the narrow inlet of Loughros Beg: as it lashed the rocks and in the long passing of time had cut its way through them, its solemn music sounded with the rising and falling cadence of many waters. The scattered grouse went scudding along the summits uttering their staccato cry of alarm; now and then the whistle of a solitary curlew pierced the still air, and once a snipe rose from a patch of marshy ground, beating his feathered drum as he darted away to a securer refuge. Now and then I caught the low note of the wheatear, as he was beginning to feel the migrant call to other lands within him. But the eagles, I saw no more; neither he nor his mate deigned to put in an appearance to gladden my eyes, as I toiled along "faint yet pursuing," according to the familiar hymn. Once indeed I heard the heart-thrilling shriek, and made my way in its direction, but only to find myself on the edge of a wall of rock overlooking a lonely tarn. But the barren and awful spot, which the royal birds chose for their last nesting-place in Ireland, matched well with their native ferocity. Few are hardy enough to intrude upon their mountain fastnesses; few are strong enough to climb the height whither they are borne easily by "the oarage of their wings."

At last I came to a lonely farmstead of an unusually large size for that part of the county: no one was to be seen about, only the noise of the farmyard broke the stillness of the valley. Full in front lay the still waters of the beautiful Lough Nalughraman, blue as the Lake of Geneva on a summer's day. It is one of

LOUGH NALRUGHAMAN



those mysterious Irish lakes, into which no streams can be seen pouring, though at the south end there is a fine burn rushing out. As I walked to join my car, which I had left six hours ago, a lonely old mare persisted in following me like a dog. When I stopped and spoke to her, she put her long chin over my shoulder, giving me what I suppose was a horse-kiss. Reluctantly I drove her back, for it would have savoured of the ridiculous to be attended by an old mare, just as if she imagined herself to be a shapely fox terrier. But the poor old creature was lonely, no doubt, and rejoiced to hear the sound of human voice, though I believe she would most commonly be addressed in picturesque and expressive Gaelic.

Two miles of bog, more or less soft, separated me from the road, where I could see my driver and he me. In a little less than an hour I was seated on the opposite side of the car and we were driving gaily to Carrick. I have no doubt he thought me a fool for tramping over those desolate mountains, while I thought him a fool for thinking me one, so that we could cry quits on that score. He had seen both of the eagles that day; but he could not tell me exactly where they still succeeded in rearing their young amongst the rugged hollows of Slieve-a-Tooey. I fear that they nest there no longer: some years later, Mrs. Adair's gamekeeper told me that one of the pair had passed away, and he could not tell if they had left any successors. A little more than half a century ago they built regularly in Glenveagh: but their nest was as regularly robbed, and as far as I can learn, they have ceased to haunt that noble valley. It may be, too, that Glenveagh Castle, rising from the margin of that deep-set and beautiful lake, has helped to scare them away from their ancestral home. Now that the mountain heights, once accessible to all, have been turned into a deer-forest, the royal birds may perchance return to the lonely moorland and lonelier rocks.

The bird which I saw upon Dooish was, I am convinced, the same one upon which I gazed from the brow of Slieve Liag, whose mate I saw afterwards in Teelin Port. At that time they had their nestingplace somewhere on Slieve-a-Tooey, which is many miles from either mountain. But their great wings can bear them with lightning-like swiftness, and over What is more, they can fly, even wide distances. when they are carrying their prey in their crooked talons, which they by no means always devour upon the spot where they have taken it. Doubtless, if their chicks grew to maturity in too large numbers, one of the pair would drive them away, for a pair of eagles require a considerable area for their feedingground. But I fear that all of the kind have now left County Donegal, taking with them one of the chief attractions of a pilgrimage amidst its wild and noble scenery. Nor just now is the country so absolutely safe to the pedestrian as it was in past times, when, if he behaved with ordinary courtesy, the stranger was always warmly welcomed and sent on his way

It is much to read of the eagle in song and legend, to see him pictured in books new and old. But to see him in his regal majesty is far more than all the reading, than all the pictures in the world. That has been one of my highest privileges as an indifferent naturalist; one of my keenest delights. The very recollection of it thrills me, whenever it rises in my mind. Once more I seem to hear the murderous shriek; I seem to see the splendid bird as I saw him more than twenty years ago, busied with his savage meal or floating over the great deep. By memory's potent magic I can call up that unique experience of my life, now that it is becoming less easy to climb to the last nesting-places left him by the persecution of man and the withering blight of old

age.

## ON HORN HEAD

Now the great winds shoreward blow; Now the salt tides seaward flow; Now the wild white horses play, Champ and chafe and toss in the spray.

—Matthew Arnold.

ORN HEAD is the general name for the promontory which forms the western boundary of the romantic inlet of Sheep It is joined to the mainland by a long isthmus of sand hills, the home of tens of thousands of rabbits. It is true that this isthmus is crossed by a watercourse running under a stout bridge, which may be said to make an island of the great headland. Geologically its vast mass of rock consists of a schist made up of quartzite and diorite, the division of which can be seen clearly at a little distance. The cliffs stretch for a length of nearly ten miles from the Little Horn to MacSwyne's Gun, rising abruptly out of the water to a height of over six hundred feet at the Great Horn. Their prevailing hue is white shot with a marvellous variety of colours wrought partly by weathering, partly by splashes of metallic gold, partly by the trailing ribands and minuter embroidery of vegetation. The magnificent crags are lashed by the full weight of the Atlantic Ocean; for Tory Island can hardly be said to break appreciably the onward rush of the great rollers from the west. When the sea is calm, the foaming waves dash themselves hungrily against the hard rock, here and there eating out a spacious cave, here and there a noble natural arch. But for the most part they fall back

baffled from the solid wall, which has been the destruction of many a stately ship, many a simple

fishing-boat.

Dunfanaghy, the "fort of the fair warrior," with its comfortable hotel, the "Stewart Arms," lies at the head of the western arm of Sheep Haven, the waters of which at high tide sing their hoarse lullaby almost underneath the windows of the outer guestchambers. I have not been able to trace either the "dun" or the "fair warrior," from which the place is named. There is a stone cashel near Claggan, on the Horn Head promontory, and a cromlech on a neighbouring hill, but they would seem to be too far away to account for the name. The country from the little town towards Creeslough, and in the other direction towards Falcarragh, consists almost entirely of brown bogland, with an occasional lough and deep ditch to vary its surface. That it was once covered with a forest of fir-trees is evident from the remains of their roots and branches all over its dull expanse. It is said with probable truth that the Elizabethan and later Lords Deputy caused the trees to be cut down because the forests afforded a considerable shelter to the Irish, who were battling for their own country and were regarded as rebels by all true Britons of the time.

Thirty years ago, when I made my first visit to Donegal, a long car was wont to run to it from Letterkenny, which always took far more passengers than it could conveniently carry. The well lay between the two rows of back-to-back occupants, and was usually piled sky-high with a miscellaneous collection of private luggage and various provisions for the public good, which were shed along the route at their proper destinations. A rail parted, or was supposed to part, the baggage from the backs of the passengers, who, however, did not escape occasional bonnetings by the fall of insecurely tied packages. The rails on either side caused a minor inconvenience:

they were calculated exactly to reach the middle of the back, and so raised a red wheal on the person of such as were so unwise as to lean against them. Those who were unused to this method of travelling and leaned forward to escape the annoyance, were in constant danger of being shot out upon the road at the sudden turn of a corner. Yet there are few easier conveyances, or better suited to Irish roads to those who understand their idiosyncrasies, than side-

cars of all descriptions.

At this point it may be worth noting that the expression "jaunting-car," however picturesque, is not used in Ireland. The car so called by English tongues is the "outside car," while the hotel bus is the "inside car." If I am asked the difference, I will answer in the Irish fashion, "In an outside cyar ye ride inside, and in an inside cyar ye ride outside." That is the most perfect definition with which I am acquainted; what is more, it exactly defines the difference between the two vehicles. Yet the solid English mind is seldom able to comprehend it. shall attempt no further differentiation, but leave it to the wit and comprehension of the reader to discover its truth. For all who would see the country to perfection, in spite of the variations of the weather, an "outside car" is the best of all possible means of conveyance, and a little experience enables the rider to keep his seat without meanly clinging to the handrail, and so calling attention to his ignorance of the matter.

Thirty years ago I disdained any other means of locomotion than had been bestowed upon me by Nature: shouldering my knapsack, strictly limited to the burden of twelve pounds, I set out on "shanks his mare," as honest Jack Brimblecombe hath it, early on a fine morning in mid-May from the small town of Milford, at the head of Mulroy Bay, that most solitary and picturesque of Donegal inlets. I had my usual provision of two hard-boiled eggs with

a paper cornet of pepper and salt carefully blended to support me by the way. I have eaten so many of these twin luxuries, that I am almost ashamed to look a brood of chickens in the face. I transferred them from my pocket to their destined place as a solemn duty rather than a personal pleasure near the imposing bridge over the Lackagh River, at that time literally swarming with its jostling multitude of spring salmon on spawning intent. The grey walls of Doe Castle rose proudly in front of me, which was once the stronghold of the brave MacSwyne, and was all but impregnable by the feeble cannon of the early seventeenth century. Its unvielding towers, when I first saw them, enclosed the modern dairy of Ards House, which lay behind it embosomed in dense woodland.

Arrived at Creeslough, a protracted drought increased by my drouthy meal drove me into Harkin's Hotel, where I had the pleasure of meeting the proprietor, a Fellow of the Royal Society of Antiquaries, Ireland, and crammed from the crown of his head to the soles of his feet with local history and folk-lore. Like most Irishmen who have the means and opportunity, he was a keen sportsman with something of a naturalist's knowledge of the wild creatures of his native county. To his delightful conversation I am indebted for many legends and much valuable information, especially of the birds nesting on Horn Head. He told me that he remembered the time when the rare pine marten haunted the woods around Mr. Olphert's mansion near To this day he could show me a Gortahork. badger's earth in the wooded banks of Ards. But I had no time to bait the last surviving member of the bear-family in Britain; nor could I have found it in my heart to disturb so peaceful an inhabitant of the pleasant countryside.

He had been factor to the murdered Earl of Leitrim, and was the only person, man, woman or

child, who had a good word to throw at the old feudal tyrant. If this amiable aristocrat saw a tenant building a hay-stack higher than he thought consistent with his own dignity, he would compel him to take it down. If he wanted to know the boundary of a little farm upon his estate, he would insist upon the tenant's running round it on the top of its earthen fences. He would not suffer the children to learn any home lessons, because he believed that the teachers would have nothing to do during their teaching hours. Moreover, as my informant put it, "It was only natural that an old bachelor liked to have pretty schoolmistresses in the schools of which he was the manager in chief!" But he was able to refute some of the worst charges brought against the Earl's memory: he contemptuously scouted one of the favourite pieces of gossip, which I had heard on the spot, that his Lordship met with his death because of too particular attentions paid to the sister of one of his murderers, the same who had been pointed out to me on the Diamond at Letterkenny. The nephew and successor of the murdered Earl reversed the policy of his uncle and earned the devoted love of his tenants in his too short life, and his son keeps up his father's policy.

Mr. Harkin was very full of the advantages which the extension of the Loughswilly light railway would bring to this part of the county. The light railway has since come into being, and no doubt fulfils some of his prophecies. But by a singularly false piece of economy this single-gauge line traces vast expanses of bog, and with one, or perhaps two, exceptions has succeeded in carefully avoiding the chief towns and villages, which it was intended to serve. For example, it is nearly two miles from the important village of Church Hill, a full mile from the historic hamlet of Kilmacrenan, though it does pass near the Holy Well of Doon, and so benefits a numerous host of pilgrims. When it reaches Creeslough, by what

can only be called "Hobson's choice," it does actually pass through the village, which indeed it was impossible to avoid. One length of the line runs over a long viaduct through Barnes Beg Gap, and its foundations are so shaky that no trains are allowed to travel more than four miles an hour along its trembling course! The line then runs through the bog four miles away from the important small town of Dunfanaghy, about three from Falcarragh, and so on until it ends in Burton Port, a great fishing station

for northern Donegal.

Before this ingenious means of burking traffic was constructed, I arrived at Dunfanaghy in time to meet one of the principal shareholders and the surveyor, the former a weedy-looking old Irishman of most courteous manners but entirely free from the national generosity, the latter a neatly built handsome Dublin-man, who has since passed beyond the reach of all railways. In the midst of our conversation, forgetful of the proverb that "Proffered service stinks," I offered to show them the most solid course for their work, as I knew every inch of the bog lying beneath Errigal and its fellow-heights. I took out the Ordnance Map and pencilled out a route, which, had it been followed, would have afforded firmer ground for the line, and been of far greater service to the inhabitants of the district. But as has so often happened in the case of well-intentioned schemes for the benefit of Ireland in the past, the course which I suggested was scouted as being too costly, with the natural consequence that the plan adopted proved to be alike more expensive and less serviceable. The station at Cashelnagore, for instance, lies in the heart of the bog near the foot of Altan Lough, and is chiefly useful to those who desire to get one of the two finest views of the stately cone of Errigal.

It may well have been the case that local interests touching the pockets of influential individuals prevailed over common sense, as indeed may happen in other places than Ireland. In County Sligo a marked example of this vicious principle of inconveniencing the public occurred somewhere about the same time. The little island of Inishmurray sorely needed a slip to enable the fishing boats to land in comfort. Such was provided by the Government under the Congested Districts' Act: but the schoolmaster succeeded in getting it built in the most inconvenient place for everybody else, just because it was opposite to his own door. Still, the little railway with all its awkwardness and perversity of route, has been of incalculable advantage to northern Donegal. It is true that the inhabitants are compelled to run conveyances to most of the stations to meet the trains: but the distances so run are far shorter than those traversed by the old mail-cars or longcars, which were not so long ago the only means of

driving from one part to another.

On the hearth of the coffee-room of the hotel lay two dogs of decidedly mixed breed, and not in the least like one another, in almost unbroken repose day and night alike, save when they were turned out to perform their toilet. Reasonably enough the elder Irishman objected to their unrequired presence in the most comfortable spot of the room, and he contrived to get rid of them in a way peculiar to himself but quite effective. Addressing each of them in tenderest tones he applied his foot alternately to them with convincing force. "Dear doggie, dear doggie," he would say, "won't you kindly go out?" punctuating every word with a well-directed kick. He was successful in his efforts: whenever either of the dogs saw him, he would rouse up the other, and both clapped their tails between their legs and fled incontinently. He was not so unfriendly to the cat, which he fed from his plate, perhaps because her ways bore some resemblance to his own, and she did not take up so much room.

Dunfanaghy itself resembles most of the small

towns in the west of Donegal: it consists of one long straggling street opening out into the "Diamond," or market-place. It has three churches, the finest of which is the Presbyterian, the largest the Catholic Chapel, and the third belongs to the Church of Ireland. Round certain parts of Donegal it may be noted that there is a strong contingent of Presbyterians, especially in the neighbourhood of Milford. The older village is a group of more or less tidylooking cabins on the way to the Golf Links, and overlooking the harbour. The harbour itself is crossed by many shoals and a considerable sand-bar, so that it is almost impassable except for smaller boats, though it is a pleasant sail across to Rosapenna with a flood tide and a fair wind. There is a bountiful supply of inns, notwithstanding the fact that illicit whiskey is still known to be manufactured in

the heart of the neighbouring mountains.

Amongst the shops, of which there are several, there is one of those stores of a miscellaneous order. so common in Ireland, where almost any less useful article can be bought, and a few of the necessities of life. It had such a dusty appearance that I took a keen interest in it, and went in whenever I had a real or imaginary need. The boxes of matches were coated with dust; the packets of Murray's Mixture were no less embedded in dust, as was the big coil of Limerick Roll. One morning I bought a pair of laces, which also were thickened with dust: the very change, which took a long time in finding, was covered with dust! Whenever I went in, I observed little purchasing going on: yet it was often crowded with those who had come in to hear the news and to contribute their own share of information. Gaelic was much in evidence, and its sonorous vowels emphasized by a liberal supply of gutturals was most impressive. The frequent shouts of laughter told of the excellence of the conversation. How the owner made a living I cannot tell, so rarely did I see him

sell anything: yet he was able to retire from busi-

ness and keep a side-car of his own.

The promontory of Horn Head fronts the north and derives its name from its resemblance to a pair of horns. It supports several fairly flourishing farms, the tiny hamlet of upper and lower Claggan, and the mansion of C. F. Stewart, Esquire, if indeed he be still living. His ancestor, an officer of King William III., obtained the property in 1700: his name was Charles, and he claimed to be a descendant of the Darnley family of Stewarts, a claim still jealously preserved by his descendants to distinguish them from the Stewarts of Ards, who purchased that estate from the head of the race of Wray, whose lavish hospitality brought him to ruin. Enraged by what he deemed to be a breach of his legal rights, that same ancestor when old and gouty challenged Mr. Wray of Ards, the offender, to fight a duel with him. The latter was not slow to accept the challenge but added the stipulation that the duel should be fought on the top of Muckish, which could only be surmounted after a stiff climb of over two thousand feet. That would have proved a hazardous enterprise for an elderly and gouty hero, even if his anger had lent unwonted lightness to his feet. Fortunately, friends intervened, so that peace was made between the two hotheads.

The present representative of the family is, or it may be was, an elderly gentleman of a kindly disposition, who has a great affection for birds and animals. It is told of him, and what is more believed, that when sportsmen boated over to the cliffs beneath his house to shoot the blue rock pigeons which nested in a large cave, he was in the habit of taking up his position on the top and rolling down big stones into the water below. As the cliffs even at this point are hardly less than three hundred feet in height, the effect of this stratagem might well have been disastrous to the venturesome visitors.

But it is not recorded that he ever succeeded in hitting a boat, even if that were his intention. He did contrive to scare away the unwelcome intruders from the fringe of his demesne. In that he is much to be commended: no sound reason can be rendered for the slaughter of a bird which is comparatively rare, when the really destructive wood pigeons are far more savoury in their wonted sepulture of beef steak and well-browned crust. All other visitors are welcome to wander at their will everywhere save in his grounds, though even this privilege is not entirely denied them.

A well-made road leads past Mr. Stewart's grounds to the ruined signal tower, which has a branch to the left leading to Pollaguill Bay and the two Claggans. But at almost all periods of the year it is largely covered over with sand blown in from the Tramore, so that often enough scarcely a trace of its presence appears after the first mile or so: nay, even the milkman sometimes loses his way and wanders amidst the sand dunes. But those who wish to see Horn Head in all its wonder and majesty, will do well to leave the buried road as soon as possible, and at the expense of a longer and more arduous journey keep as near as may be to the edge of the cliffs. Though they do not rise to the height of the crags in the southern half of the county, being never more than six hundred and forty feet above the sea, they are wonderfully varied, and in most cases hang sheer above the tossing waters. I left the two railway prospectors to tramp over the bog in search of a route to their mind, and early on a mid-May morning took my way to the Great Horn.

When I had passed over the sand-strewn track and reached the edge, I found that an innumerable company of sea-birds of many different kinds was busily engaged in nesting, and in some cases tending their callow young. They can be best seen from a boat, which can be rowed past their favourite breeding

stations, when they rise in dense clouds, lifting up their voices in indignant clamour almost deafening in its intensity. But the day was sunny, and I was minded to see the magnificent view from the height, no less than to give serious attention to the screaming birds. Several boggy valleys lay in the path to the edge; but they were shallow and comparatively easy to cross. They were dotted over with the pale bog violet and its light-green heart-shaped leaves. After floundering about for a short time, I came to firmer ground and rejoiced in the invigorating Atlantic breeze. Soon Sheep Haven spread its deep blue waters before me with Rossgull and Melmore Point to the east, stretched out like the index-finger of a Titan orator engaged in enforcing his argument. On the narrower neck of land stands the famous Rosapenna Hotel, not far from the sand-covered ruins of the palace of the last Lord Boyle, which are sometimes visible when a high wind has blown away

the sandy veil.

Little Horn Head rose in sight shaped like its larger namesake, and bearing some resemblance to the Little Orme. The water beneath looked treacherously calm from the height, but a long line of heaving foam betrayed the waves breaking high against the rugged rocks. Every turn of the cliffs brought a fresh picture of unspeakable grandeur; the colours were so varied and so vivid, the outlines so clear cut and so sharp. The height increased with every onward step, and there were many headlands scooped out of the main mass by the united action of sun, wind, and water. One white cape was made up of shining quartzite wrinkled with darker diorite, the crevices of which were trimmed with fantastic patterns of green lichen, golden moss, tufts of seathrift just beginning to lift up its pink tassels, long green ferns, vivid streaks of metallic colouring, and ledges crowded with gulls. Here and there, where they were permitted to nest, was a troop of greycheeked jackdaws uttering shrill cries of "Jack,

Tack!"

The male birds rose as I approached, sometimes all but brushing my face with their long wings, and glaring at me with angry eyes. I was near enough to see across a narrow gully one of their nests, if nest it could be called, which had been abandoned by both parents for a moment. It was made up of strips of sea-weed and strings of grass thrown carelessly in a little hollow of the ledge, which contained two large brownish mottled eggs, which I recognized as those of the great black-backed gull, before I caught sight of their owners. They lay point to point, perhaps to prevent them from falling into the abyss, or it may be that they had settled in this way, when the female bird had left them in her alarm. This nest was one of a small colony, which had taken up its airy quarters near a much larger party of lesser black-backs at a considerable height up the precipitous cliff. Just over it, many tufts of the sturdy leaves of the golden samphire almost brushed the large eggs, which the fresh breeze stirred into a slight rolling motion.

At this point let me warn the unwary against eating gulls' eggs, though they are looked upon as a supreme delicacy by those sophisticated palates which revel in odd and distinctive nastiness. I once tried them thirty years ago, and the shock to my digestive system remains fixed firmly in my memory. They nearly produced an effect upon me which no storms on the Irish Sea have hitherto succeeded in achieving. They were served cold, hard-boiled, shelled, and garnished with parsley which was the only wholesome thing about them. The yolk was plainly perceptible through the translucent bluishwhite, and appeared to be of a bright vermilion colour. But their taste was literally prodigious: it combined into one nauseating whole the united flavours of anchovy sauce, cod liver oil, Yarmouth

bloaters, partially decayed animal matter, and others of a like kind, which the addition of salt increased in intensity. From that moment I determined to suffer the gulls to hatch their eggs in peace, and allow the admirers of gastronomic eccentricities to consume them according to their liking. Yet I have seen a slender Irish girl eat at least two of these monstrosities and survive.

It was the first time that I had seen the great black-backed gull, which dwarfed all the rest of its kindred, and was far handsomer than any of them. It was a truly splendid bird with its bright yellow bill stained with red at the tip, its snowy head and breast, and the dark brownish grey of its back. In flight its wings must have stretched more than four feet from end to end, and when it alighted it looked nearly as large as a goose. Its legs and webbed feet were of a delicate pink, and seemed almost too dainty to be set down upon the sharp rocks. But for all its beauty it is a savage bird, which feeds upon dead bodies of animals, and murders and disembowels smaller birds. For a time I kept quite still, with the pair wheeling around me, and the male bird uttering a deep yet sharp barking sound. Then the same shameless creature was not content with barking at me, but insulted me in the most malicious way possible to a flying bird. In one second the right side of my face looked and felt as if I had been sitting for a plaster-cast. Indignantly I caught up a large tuft of grass and cleansed my cheek, but without shifting my position, and stood still awaiting the development of events.

In the course of time the birds realized that I was not bent upon mischief, nor indeed could I have reached their eggs, had I wished to do so. The ledge which upheld the nests of the colony was many feet below my position on the opposite side of the gully, and the cliff was not one to be attempted hastily by any climber, however skilful. Though I am not

easily frightened by any edge, however high it may be, I had a wholesome respect for my neck, and had no mind to be precipitated spinning round and round into the depths below. By the time I had counted a dozen nests of this huge gull, the pair left me in peace, the female to hatch her eggs, the male to keep strict guard over himself and her. The colony of lesser black-backs which had taken up its quarters on a ledge some distance below, and appeared to be far more numerous as its members rose into the air and expressed their dislike of me plainly, but not so obtrusively as their larger namesake had done. Nor did they adopt his disgusting method of scaring

me from the neighbourhood of their homes.

From the spot where I was just then, I looked in front and saw the signal tower perched upon the height above, which seemed as if it had been built under an overhanging rock. But that was only an illusion of perspective; indeed the tower would have been of little use, had it not been exposed to all the winds of heaven. Once it had been of great importance during the Napoleonic wars; now it was a stately ruin of a much larger size than most others of its kind. It was built in a shallow hollow, which may have been scooped out by the hand of man, and surrounded by a thick earthen embankment of some height. It had two stories furnished with windows on all sides, so that any hostile intruder might be espied on his first appearance. windows commanded a wide prospect, especially over the sea, nor could even a small boat approach the great headland without being sighted, while it was yet far away. The tower was calculated to accommodate a large contingent of watchers, and a wide open space lay in front, on which a signal-fire could be lighted at a moment's notice.

In those early days a large stack of wood was stored in the enclosure, and a big pile built up on the open space. For their private fuel the watchers would

certainly use the peat, which was to be cut in the bogs immediately below the tower on the land side. It must have been a laborious task to carry up the building materials and place them in position at a time when the road itself had to be made, no less than to keep the watchers well supplied with the necessary wood. There may have been more trees on the Head one hundred and twenty years ago; but even so, they would need cutting down and carrying nearly a mile. It must have been lonely at all times for the watchers, and terrible when great winter storms, gathering force on their way along the Atlantic, broke upon the tower, howling threats of destruction as they swept onward with pitiless fury. So they passed their time, amusing themselves as best they could, and watching ever for a foe who never came.

Straight in front was the Great Horn, or highest point of the cliff, though the hill behind was more than two hundred feet higher. It stood out of the water like the wall of a Cyclopean fortress, against which the rage of wind and wave spent their might in vain. The ridge leading to it was narrow, though not dangerous except to those who cannot accommodate themselves to heights and distances. The turf covering it was quite firm and wonderfully green, save where it was starred over with clumps of scattered daisies. As I stood on it two lines rushed into my mind which have haunted me from childhood, which I think were written by Charles Wesley when he stood on the desolate

height of Land's End, in Cornwall:

Lo on a narrow neck of land 'Twixt two contending seas I stand.

I can remember no more: but the lines did sum up what I thought and felt, as I walked leisurely along the narrow surface to the end of the cliff. It may be that the sea was all one, a tiny fragment of the vast western ocean: yet the unyielding crags divided it into two parts, each of which was striving to eat its way into the solid base on either side. As the fresh wind whistled around me, I felt light as a

wild goat on the mountain-side.

The breeze blew straight across from America, freshening every moment, ruffling the channel between Tory Island and the mainland near Derrybeg, and driving the whitening waves against the rocks of that barren land. It may be noted in passing, that Tory has nothing to do with party politics, nor is it synonymous with an Irish bog-trotter: it is a name given to the island because of the towerlike cliffs on its north-eastern side. I noticed a dark cloud gathering over its western end, and the three islands which lie to the south of it, Inishbeg, Inishdooey and Inishbofin, to the last of which the famous witch's "white cow" of Irish legend found her way. I could not help fearing that a storm was gathering, though the sun was at that moment shining bright. But I resigned myself to all emergencies; at the worst, the signal tower was not far away, and though roofless it would shelter me from the western wind. The cliff descends abruptly on either side, while the extreme point literally hangs over the abyss. On that point I stood like Moses on Pisgah; but instead of looking over the fertile land of Canaan and the muddy Jordan, I looked out over the great deep, gradually growing greyer under the growing mantle of cloud.

Turning to the east I looked down a gully eaten out of the head, steep, awful, rugged, stretching right down to the tossing waves below. Yet Nature's careful fingers had trimmed it with all kinds of vegetation and thus veiled its sheer flanks from top to bottom of its extent. Far down its edge I could see tufts of the golden samphire, which were green and stunted now, though unmistakable to the eye of the trained botanist. In a few weeks they

would be gay enough, when their deep yellow stars trembled in the autumn breeze. Darker patches of sea-thrift mottled the narrow ledges, the pink flowers of which seemed almost white in the softening light of distance. One slanting fissure was adorned with trailing ferns, and little lawns of daisied grass covered jutting pieces of time-worn rock. Down this gully and around the Great Horn itself were myriads of sea-birds lifting up their discordant cries, as if they were conscious of the approach of a storm. They looked like tiny scraps of white paper fluttering through the air, which had been scattered by the

gods in some aerial "paper chase."

Mr. Harkin had assured me that the white-tailed eagle still built upon Horn Head, but I am confident that he was mistaken. I have tramped the full line of cliffs on six several occasions, both with and without a field-glass, and have never seen so much as a feather of its tail. I am far from denying that the place itself is eminently suitable for the great bird both as a nesting-place and a feeding-ground, which may have been seen by the watchers in the tower in an older time, but has ceased to haunt any part of the cliffs of Donegal. On this occasion I kept my eyes well about me, hoping in vain to catch a glimpse of the conspicuous white tail. Once I fancied that I had actually seen it about half-way down the rocky face; but when I looked more carefully, it was nothing more than a dark shadow cast by a flying cloud upon some moving plant leaning over the deep. Many other birds I did see, and some almost at as close quarters as the great blackbacked gull. But the king refused to put in an appearance, so that I concluded reluctantly that he had ceased to hold his court in these desolate fastnesses. A better equipped ornithologist may be more fortunate; but I did not even set my eyes upon the commoner peregrine, which is the noblest of the falcon-tribe.

Meanwhile, dark clouds were gathering over the sky, the sun was hiding his golden face, the wind grew loud and boisterous so that I found it not easy to keep my feet, great waves were clearly dashing against the rocky towers of Tory, and I thought it best to retrace my steps to the signal tower, where I could at least escape the keenness of the blast, until the rising storm had passed away. The hoarsevoiced western wind roared around the solid masonry of the ruin, and cold scuds of rain dashed into my face as I climbed to a window, so that I could watch the war of blast and billow. Sometimes the gusts came with a loud sobbing, as of a giant in pain; sometimes they pealed aloud their triumphant song. A flight of swallows, which I had noted near a tiny pond which I had passed some hours before, took refuge in the turrets of the tower, uttering a low complaining note most unlike their customary cheerful twittering. Evidently there was a great commotion amongst the nesting sea-birds, which poured forth their shrilling shrieks in answer to the blast. They had small need to fear; they were secure enough in the crannies of the time-worn rocks. But they could not resist wheeling round and round in agitated flight about their airy fortress in search of some fancied place of greater safety.

In a little time the sky grew dark as night; then a momentary hush could be felt, so still that I held my breath. Next moment the black clouds seemed to split over the gloomy vault, and vivid streams of lightning shot forth from every crack, hissing downwards into the deep grey billows. Then a stupendous crash of thunder seemed to shake the solid rock, and did shake the tower, bringing down a few fragments of the looser masonry. On it went, rumbling over the roaring waters, awaking a thousand echoes amongst the ragged crags. Another series of crooked rivers of lightning flashed along the gloomy heaven, another tremendous burst of

thunder followed, another booming of echoes answered the fierce tumult. The lightning was so near that I removed to a place of securer shelter, from which I could see nothing but the black sky above, and the oft-repeated glare of the continual flashes, though I could hear much. I could hear the increasing roar of the wild waters, the loud bellowing of the thunder with its responsive echoes, the bluster of the wind, the swirl of the rain against the tower,

and the terrified shrieking of the sea-mews.

For nearly an hour the storm swept over the Head: but I felt quite safe and comparatively dry. I could not help thinking of the past, when the tower stood whole and sound with its complement of brave men within its sturdy walls. They had heard hundreds of such storms; they had endured the savage fury of the Atlantic gales; they had spent summer and winter alike in that lonely spot; they had often been cut off from all communication with the rest of the mainland and had watched their stock of provisions slowly diminishing with anxious eyes. They had gathered round their peat-fire, perhaps played with a grimy pack of cards at piquet or one of the games popular in their time. They had consoled themselves with copious flagons of mighty ale, or the fire-water of the country. They had told tales, though their voices could hardly be heard in the tumult around them. They had spent long hours in weary watching for the invasion. which had never come to pass.

At length the clouds broke into renewed splendour, the sun shone brightly over the wind-swept waves, the western gale died away into faint murmurs, the prospect cleared, and there was a magnificent view on all sides of me when I left the tower. But I longed to see the birds at the other side of the Head, and I left the Great Horn behind me. For much of the way there was a kind of natural parapet, if such I may call it, between the cliff edges and the sea.

On the land side were rolling expanses of grass and bog with occasional patches of sand, where rabbits began to steal out of their burrows and scamper over the scanty herbage. At a suitable spot I turned to look back at the Great Horn, and was thrilled by the majesty of its shape and the beauty of its colour. Its full height cut the sky once more clear and blue, towering above the breakers now crested with white and dashing over its deeply scarred base with appalling fury. They must have risen many feet above their angry surface, so large were the clouds

of snowy spray.

The two blunt horns were its distinctive feature. giving abundant testimony to the exact appropriateness of its name. Under and behind its ledges were green lines of vegetation, but too far off to distinguish into its various kinds. The face of the huge cliff was scarred with a wonderful network of lines and fissures: the strata were very distinctly marked, and the two kinds of rock showed themselves in vivid colours in the renewed sunlight. But the varied shades of colour were beyond the skill of the artist's brush, or the poet's subtler pen, to suggest even faintly. I leave them to the imagination, which is after all the best landscape-painter when the scene is no longer before the eyes. I stood in rapt silence before one of Nature's sublimest sights, bareheaded and full-hearted; nor could I recall a single line from my favourite poets, which did not seem bald and utterly trivial in the face of that grand reality. Let rural bards sing of soft sylvan scenes and prattling brooks, if they will; let Byron chant in deeper tone the sublimities of the Alps in his "Manfred." But let me satisfy my soul with gazing on the giant cliff soaring above the roaring sea, when a brief storm has just swept over its wrinkled face.

The frightened sea-mews were beginning to settle down once more, like moving points of white against

the darker rock, while they still scolded the wind and one another with piercing shrieks. But I was not long left to peaceful contemplation: a hoarse grumbling sound seemed to issue from beneath my feet; I turned quickly round and never moved so much as an eyelid, that I might see what it might be. In a moment a puffin started quickly from its burrow, where no doubt its mate was quietly attending to her maternal duties, and where it may have taken shelter from the storm. Its rapid flight and its parrot-like bill, its white cheeks and breast, and its brown back shot by me like a flash. It made me almost dizzy when I saw it fly straight over the precipitous ridge, drop down into the dark green waters, and dive beneath the swollen surface. I lay down by the side of the burrow, and stretched my arm up to the shoulder into its recess; but I did not come anywhere near the eggs, or the spot where the female bird may have been sitting in its dark security. I have no doubt that my misguided zeal for inquiry would have been rewarded by a fearsome punishment from the mother-bird, had my hand come within her reach. Past experience has taught me that puffins, even when taken at a disadvantage, are brave enough, and can bite to good purpose.

Unwillingly I drew back my arm, stained with the soil of the burrow, and looked about me. I soon found that I was in the presence of a fairly large colony of similar burrows. But neither with stick nor arm could I induce any other birds to quit their shelter. At first I imagined that the colony had turned out a company of rabbits from their ancient homes: but I am convinced that the strong bill of these active divers had done the whole of the work. I walked as cautiously as possible from the colony of puffins to a narrow creek, which ran far into the rocks. The waves tossed and thundered in its depths, still angered by the assault of the wind: but the tide was beginning to retreat, and

here and there strips of pebbled beach began to show themselves. The spray was flung at least a hundred feet into the air or against the rocks, as if the waters were bidding defiance to the storm, which had so recently ceased to trouble them. I gazed down into the depths and saw on the lower rocks a multitude of sea anemones with their chestnut tentacles folded into a tight knot. The long pinkish leaves of the dulse stretched riband-like over the commoner seaweed, as the waves went forth from the narrow outlet, scolding as they retreated towards

the deeper water.

The ledges of the creek were crowded with birds of many kinds, of which the kittiwake seemed to be most plentiful, and I could hear the male call, which has given its name to the bird. Long rows, one above another of them, sat on their eggs, packed quite close together on their firmly built nests. Sometimes one sedate matron would rise to her feet, shake herself as if annoyed by the falling spray, and finally settle down to her appointed task. I was too far off to greatly disturb the colony. Once indeed they rose in a body and appeared almost to fill the creek with a silvery cloud of moving creatures. Then the males returned to their wonted task of keeping guard and assisting their mates in their weary office. Looking towards the sea I caught sight of a flight of "sea swallows," so-called, gracefully skimming the waves at the narrow gap. They disappeared so quickly that I could not tell whether they were common or Arctic terns, though both are found in this place.

I stood watching them out of sight when a stranger appeared, beating the air with its wide strong wings. The pale ruddy tint on its head and throat told me at once that it was a gannet, which, so far as I know, does not breed on Horn Head. But there it was, a male bird in fresh courting costume, and singularly graceful on the wing. When

it alighted, it completely dwarfed the rest of the gulls, which did not seem to take kindly to its unusual presence. What it was doing on Horn Head in May, when it ought to have been with its colony on the lesser Skellig far away to the southwest, I could not tell. I have seen the great birds fishing in great numbers in a little bay not far from Coomenoole, at the west end of Dingle promontory, with flight and stoop as noble as those of the peregrine itself. But here was a solitary stranger two hundred miles and more away from home, looking about with keen and inquiring eyes. It may have come to look out a site for a new home, to which it could lead a colony; it may have been a mateless bachelor, or a sorrowful widower seeking

a solitary place to comfort its affliction.

While I was thus meditating upon the fate of the stately bird, it rose suddenly, spread its broad wings which could not have been less than six feet from tip to tip, took its flight to Tory Island, and I saw no more of its kind then or afterwards on Horn Head. When it had gone, I left the narrow creek and pursued my westward path with the wind blowing full in my face, but as invigorating as a dip into the summer sea. I had not gone far when I found myself on a pleasant but slippery slope of green turf lying between two cliffs, and above a sheer descent into the dark depths. Behind the rocks at the back of me, there was a considerable rabbit warren, where I had just seen a number of rabbits. jet-black except the white scut and the belly, scurrying away at the sound of a human footfall. Doubtless the white scut serves the rabbit the same purpose of the rear-light of a bicycle, which is something of a nuisance to itself, but a sure guide to its fellows. The white scut on a black rabbit had quite a striking appearance, and would no doubt attract many enemies.

At this point I heard an almost indescribable

sound not unlike the mingled growling of a dog and quacking of a duck. I sat down as suddenly as Miss Betsy Trotwood, when she caught sight of the little ragged David Copperfield. The movement was involuntary and almost sent me sliding down into the sea; but I was fortunate enough to grasp a tough root of heather, which saved my life. The grassy slope was drenched with the rain which had fallen, and not a little hard to my comparatively unpadded person, but I determined to sit where I was, until I had seen the cause of the unwonted noise. I had alighted behind a large bush of heather, so tall that only my head appeared above its dark-green stems, and I was almost hidden from any living being that might pass me. The growling and barking continued, growing more and more defined as it neared my damp throne. It proved to be a fine sheldrake swearing in its own language at some unexplained cause, which flew swiftly right in front of my face, and at no great distance, though to the full as much startled by me as I was by it. It happened to be the first which I had seen outside of a museum at that time, and I rejoiced exceedingly. The difference between the living bird and the stuffed specimen was so great that I never wanted to see a stuffed specimen again.

Though the handsome bird gave me but little time to observe it, I shall never forget the beauty of its spring plumage, lighted up by the brilliant sunshine. Its head was of a dark glossy green with sparkles of light all over it, bordered by a snow-white collar fringed with a broad band of deepest orange, while the rest of its feathers were black and white tipped with paler orange near the tail. It was the only one of its kind which I saw that day, though they are plentiful on Horn Head, and it took good care not to give me much time to admire its rare beauty. In far fewer moments than it takes me to write down the words, it had plunged

down the abrupt edge into the boiling waves with no apparent fear, though it may have received an unwelcome surprise when it dropped on to their seething surface. I could not see the exact direction from which it had come, or I should have spent some time in looking for the possible colony, which I had little doubt was close to me, and had settled down in part of the warren, to the great annoyance

of its legitimate owners.

But I thought it then, and I think it now, the handsomest of the native wild ducks which haunt this tempestuous shore. I had often doubted the flowery description of a bird of this family given by the mysterious Philip Quarll, of which he was robbed by the two French mariners; but I doubted it no longer, for I had seen a duck to match it in the beautiful blending of the colours of its plumage. I longed to see its companions, but they kept themselves serenely hidden in some place unknown, which they refused to leave to gratify my longing. I rose up with a feeling of cooling damp behind me, and I felt like a growing cluster of the floating water bladder-wort. But I was soon cheered by a concert of Nature's most delightful music, high in the heaven above me: by this time quite a multitude of skylarks had risen into the buoyant air to salute the return of the sun. One against the other they trilled their matchless minstrelsy, which could be heard loud above the tumult of the waves which dashed against the rocks, and the continuous booming of the more distant ocean. Birds of the same species have very different voices, as the keen ear can detect; but these little feathered choristers blended their choral song into one perfect harmony.

As I marched stoutly but carefully onward, a large peacock butterfly met me, which the sun had not long called forth from its chrysalis, and the wind had driven from some unknown quarter to this lonely spot. It sat upon a sunny stone in all its

loveliness of form and colour; as it opened and shut its glorious wings, it seemed to appear and disappear, so dark and like a withered leaf is the underside. As it sat lazily sunning itself, it seemed to jewel its resting-place with rubies, topazes, and deep blue sapphires shading into amethysts. But a sidelong gust down the gap between the cliffs bore it over the steep rock seaward, where its brief, bright life would soon be at an end. As I followed its flight with a pitying glance, I caught sight of the noble natural arch of Temple Breaga spanning the boisterous waves, which had hewn it out of the solid rock. The sheldrake's sudden apparition and disappearance had prevented me from seeing it sooner. But there it stood, high above the waters, which broke through and against its sturdy columns with

angry spite.

For those who dare trust themselves to its frail canvas and matchwood lining, it is pleasant to sail through this fine arch in a coragh, as I found a little later during my stay in Donegal. With ordinary care this light and slender boat is comparatively safe, and its movement over the waters is delightfully easy and exhilarating. The voyager, who is not sitting on the thwarts at the oar, needs to accustom himself to the sailing, or he may think that the boat is breaking into splinters. As he sits on the bottom, he both feels and hears a great crash just beneath him and barely parted from him, which is simply the contact with a larger wave than usual. But the sea needs to sink into nothing more than "a rippling on the crag," if the coragh is to sail round Horn Head in perfect safety. From this most ancient survival of our mercantile marine, Temple Breaga Arch is a wonderful sight: Time and Nature have joined to embroider fairy patterns upon its hard face, of most astonishing variety of line and colour. The dainty lichens and streams of metallic lustre might teach any human architect a sound lesson in the blending of form with almost

fairylike tints of surpassing beauty.

The cliffs grew gradually lower, but not less precipitous, as I moved along the belt of greensward keeping as close to the edge as I could. In the course of time I came to a little bay, wherein the waters were much calmer than elsewhere, and their swaying surface was dotted over with several kinds of gulls and a flock of puffins. It was good to watch these little divers appearing and disappearing, as they sought their food. Nature was surely in a humorous mood, when they were brought into being, so comical are their broad beaks and merry little faces. The bay was fenced with slightly shelving walls of rock, half in sun half in shadow, which opened to the north by a narrow entrance, just inside of which was a vaulted cave, unhappily quite out of reach. Even if I had had a rope, I should have found the rocks treacherous and slippery, covered as they were with vividly green ooze and brown seaweed. I stood as close to its mouth as I could on a short and abrupt promontory, and gazed into the darkness within. Tufts of sea spleenwort fringed the entrance, and a big crag near the mouth was covered with chestnut-hued sea anemones, some with their flowerlike tentacles outstretched. some with them folded into a tight knot.

From within I heard a confused croaking sort of noise, which seemed to issue from a deep recess; at the same time a distinctly putrid aroma assailed my sensitive nostrils. I knew at once what the inhabitants of the cave must be, so I made sure of my foothold and waited, knowing that some of them would soon show themselves, now that the storm was over. I had not long to wait: in a moment or two there was a great scuffling of wings, and several dark-looking shags came flying out into the bay. I could see by the flourishing crests of two of them that they were male birds in fine spring plumage.

For an instant they perched on a shoal just rising above the surface of the water, and right in front of their cave. I had not time to observe more; they caught sight of me, and with sharp croaks made off to the sea, followed by many more which had taken alarm from their warning note. I longed for a boat that I might see for the first time the nests of these dark-hued birds along the ledges of the cave, which seemed to be of considerable depth, though I am very sure that the pungent perfume would soon have driven me out into the fresher air.

When they had gone farther out to sea to two tiny rocky islets. I climbed up from the ledge and turned to the western side of the cliff, which at this point was about four hundred feet in height above the frothing breakers. Quarter of a mile farther on stood a little headland, sheer and precipitous, almost overhanging the darkling waters at its base. Yet it had been weathered into a great number of jagged ledges, which ran in waving lines one above the other almost from top to bottom. Here a wonderful sight met my eyes, which were quite unaccustomed hitherto to any such spectacles: there were two large colonies of nesting birds, the one consisting of guillemots, the other of razor-bills, apparently living in happy amity side by side. There the female birds sat on their eggs line over line, almost as still as if they had been porcelain images. Some of the male birds flew through the air, talking in their own language to their mates, and apparently cheering them up during their arduous task.

Almost the moment that they saw me, the birds of both colonies, male and female alike, rose in a dense cloud, the razor-bills looking black, as I saw them from above, the guillemots brown. Seeing that I was alone, they wheeled round me, uttering imprecations in a curious growling tone, which is easier to hear than to describe. They were clearly bent upon driving me away, and I was just as determined to stay where

I was and to see all that could be seen. So I stood my ground firmly, making single-stick guards and cuts with my stout blackthorn, though in fact the birds never came near enough to taste its quality. It would have been an amusing sight for an onlooker, and a splendid opportunity for a camera-fiend. I had no camera with me or I should certainly have tried to get one or more snapshots, in spite of the threatening attitude of the birds. As it was I kept my head as well as I could, undismayed by the anger of the

flying squadrons.

My blackthorn was a fine specimen of its kind, knotted with thick stumps of thorns each capable of much execution. An old Irishman at Ballintra had once asked me to let him handle it: nothing loth I placed it in his horny hands, which he passed lovingly over every knot in turn. Then shaking his head with an air of profound conviction he said, "Sure, it's a grand blackthorn: there's a cut in every knot!" He had visions of the joys of a Fair in his native place, at which he could test the strength of sundry skulls with a stick like mine. It has been said with much probability, that an Irishman so armed passed a booth, through the canvas of which he could see a number of heads, every one of which he hit as he passed. That is one way of obtaining enjoyment: but just at the moment I was too much concerned to defend my own head to think of damaging that of another. Nor had I any wish to be plastered again, as I had been earlier in the day, though these birds were smaller and would be able to cover less area. Still, when irritated, they have but feeble control of their emotions, and the consequences are unpleasant.

I turned away intending to find a place from which I could watch the two colonies with greater comfort, and without exciting the fears and anger of the birds. I had not gone far away when they ceased to annoy me and returned to their more legitimate

task of laying and sitting upon their eggs in peace. As I have said the two colonies seemed to agree well with one another: there were occasional bickerings, especially when one had laid hold of a choice morsel which another coveted; but they did not last long. It was not easy to distinguish the birds from one another when they were actually sitting on their single eggs. But as far as I could see, the guillemots sat perfectly upright after the fashion of our grandmothers, turning their white breasts to the face of the rock, while the razor-bills, though hardly less upright, did not seem to take this precaution against the disappearance of their eggs into the sea. bird seemed to have built any nest, or even placed strips of seaweed upon the ledges. They chose little hollows in the rock, and confided in their own skill to

bring out their solitary chicks.

I was deeply interested in the sight, which was the first of the kind which I had ever seen. When their alarm had subsided the birds were so thoroughly absorbed in their work, so unconcerned with the greater world of man and his turmoil, so much of it needless, it must be confessed. Now and then a male bird would bring food of some kind to the female. and dart off over the waves to a few scattered rocks lying some distance off in the open sea. appeared to be their favourite fishing-ground, and they were rarely unsuccessful. Few sea-birds seem to pay any attention to a coragh: I have passed quite close to a barnacle goose when in one, which did not appear to alter its course so much as a foot. were the colonies disturbed by the appearance of a coragh, which had put out from Pollaguill Bay, and may have been bearing its owners to see if the storm had swept away all traces of the corks marking the sites of their lobster-pots.

Not far away, but out of sight of the nesting-place of the guillemots and razor-bills, was another abrupt rocky face also scarred with transverse ledges, where a goodly number of cormorants were nesting. The birds dropped into the sea at my approach, nor would they suffer me to come near enough to observe even in the most casual manner their habits. I saw at once that they were much larger than the shags, and their plumage appeared lighter on account of the greenish iridescence of their backs, when the sun shone upon them with dazzling brightness. Their hoarse yet sharp cries reminded me of those of a flock of wild geese, though they were not nearly so penetrating. Some of them seemed to have got the start of others, and to have actually brought out their young. At all events there were one or two distressed-looking naked bodies on the rocky shelves, which I took to be their offspring. Neither then nor since have I seen young cormorants just hatched near enough to say what they are like. I had forgotten my field-glass and stood at a great disadvantage for the study of birds, and the cliffs were too sheer for me to have attempted to climb them, had I been able to reach their base.

Leaving the flock of cormorants I went along the edge of the cliff, keeping my eyes on the waves, which were beginning to sink as the tide went out, and were of a deep green melting into various shades of blue as they rolled to meet the blue sky on the horizon. The path was still difficult, and needed close watching: there were so many pitfalls, so many slippery places in it, that I had much ado to keep my feet. I saw thousands of gulls of the commoner kinds, such as herring-gulls and black-headed gulls, employed for the most part in hatching their eggs. The so-called "common gull" was conspicuous by its absence, having, I suppose, gone far inland to breed, near some of the countless lakes of Donegal. Even in Ireland, the superstition prevails, that these handsome birds only come inland when there is stormy weather at sea. By this time few moorland reservoirs are without their large contingent of "common gulls" busily engaged in perpetuating

their species.

Like the rest of the birds, they viewed me with profound suspicion and positive disfavour, though they did not come so near me. They rose in clouds, shrieked in such unison as they could compass, though sometimes they succeeded in producing a fugue of discords, with the object of scaring me from their untidy nests. Looking once more towards the waves I saw, what I had long wanted to see, a flight of stormy petrels, or "Mother Carey's Chickens" as the sailors call them, scudding along the frothing crest of a great roller. It was too early for them to be making their nests, so they were toying with one another and alternately swimming and flying, without the slightest fear of the choppy sea. Their dark wings and back reminded me of the ordinary housemartin; but they were somewhat bigger and far more nimble in their movements. They danced along with the ease of midges under an overhanging tree, looking quite as slender and graceful on the vast expanse of the swaying waters. What they had thought of the brief storm, which had swept over the great Head, I would fain have known: but at the present moment they were setting mankind a good example by making the best of the cloudless sunshine.

Whether they uttered any sound or not, I was unable to distinguish: the ceaseless clanging of the great breakers against the rock drowned every bird-cry but that of the shriller-voiced gulls and the joyous sky-larks overhead. But I have seldom seen more graceful and attractive little birds either on sea or land. It is true that their plumage was of a dull and sooty colouring, but their movements were so light, so elegant, that they seemed literally to dance over the white crests of the dark-green waves. The spring seemed to fire their warm blood and to fill them with a joy in life, which was highly infectious. For my part, I too felt the spring throbbing in my

veins, and making the long tramp over the ground by turns slippery, rugged, and sandy, a veritable delight. Though I cannot sing in tune, as I was quite alone I ventured to insult the heavens with snatches of tuneless song, till unwittingly I fell in with a flock of sheep, which showed no appreciation of my musical efforts, but scattered in all directions.

I had seen almost too much, though I took brief notes of each new bird or creature which I met on my journey. There were many birds which I could not identify, for Horn Head is a favourite resort for sea-fowl of most kinds. I tried to recall what Mr. Harkin had told me about its feathered visitors, but I could only keep in mind some dozen species of the less common ones, all of which I recognized from his admirable description of them. I had yet one more bird to see for the first time; it was one of the waders, perhaps common enough, but at that time a stranger to me. I left the two Claggans behind me and found myself in the lovely Pollaguill Bay with its northern fringe of cliffs, its broad orange sands, and its shining stream. Just where the brook spreads out over the pebble-dotted sand to meet the sea, I caught sight of an oyster-catcher, which I recognized by its vermilion beak and legs, its dark collar, and it brown back shading its white belly. It saw me at the same time and made off at top speed to the northern cliff. It was a handsome bird, and I should like to have seen more of it; but its needless fears and the fates themselves were against me.

I crossed the stream and turned towards MacSwyne's Gun. Though it was by no means my nearest way home, I had heard so much of this famous blow-hole, that I wanted to see it, and if possible to hear its alleged tremendous report. But since it had not gone off during the brief storm, I was not hopeful, especially as the tide was still going out. Afterwards, I learned that the sea had smashed into pieces some part of the cavern, so that nothing but the

accustomed roaring of the waves could be heard to-day. I had been solemnly informed that once upon a time it could be heard at Derry, which lies just thirty miles from it, as the crow flies. That statement did credit to the imagination of him who had uttered it, whose name I would not reveal for worlds! He was a business man doing a large trade in dry goods, who might be suspected of puffing his wares as extravagantly as he had puffed one of Donegal's natural wonders, and his trade might well suffer in consequence of the largeness of his utterance.

Be that as it may, I soon reached the great sea-cave with its deep recess, at the end of which rose its wave-worn upright shaft. It was very fine and imposing: the waves rolled in and out of the cave. but hardly touched the blow-hole proper. But the hollowed rocks roared with a sound like thunder, and sea-mews flew in and out, looking tiny enough in its darkling depths. It has gained its name from one of the most martial, not to say predatory, of the septs of Donegal, and even now in its partially dilapidated condition, it is well worthy of its name. It was a wonderful experience to stand on the edge of the great chimney and to gaze down into the depths below, where the white foam of the waves shone against the dark and rugged rocks. It was hardly less wonderful to hear the echoes of the "wild sealaughter" of the gulls, which strayed into the deep recesses, and were able to make themselves heard above all the tumult as they called one another, and piercing echoes answered their clamour. Now and then a line of yellow sand, lighted up by a shy sunbeam, appeared for a moment to disappear almost as quickly as it had shown itself. But the turmoil was terrific, and betrayed the mighty force of the waves with its continual roaring.

I could have stood where I was for a long time, entranced by what I saw, had I not happened to look at my watch almost for the first time since I had left

the hotel that morning: there had been so much of enthralling interest, that I had had no time to look at the time. It was then six o'clock, and dinner was at seven: no doubt dinner is a mundane theme in the midst of Nature's glories; but it is after all a necessity, not to say a delight of the human system, and I had no mind to be late. I had been away fully nine hours in the freshest of air, amid wonderful scenery, and in company with innumerable sea-birds much of the time. I had rejoiced in a series of rock pictures to be had within the same compass nowhere else, though the living creatures had absorbed most of my attention. Furthermore, I had witnessed a marvellously fine thunderstorm lashing the Atlantic Ocean into a wild fury. Two miles consisting mainly of loose sand lay before me, swelling here and there into marram-spiked dunes, and I knew that the last stretch of the walk would be the only wearisome part of the solitary expedition. But, as Emerson wisely insists, there are compensations for troubles of every kind, and I was not long in finding the truth of his philosophy of life in this direction.

Between the sand-hills lay occasional green expanses of considerable extent, adorned with many flowers, some by no means common. The tiny pansy was present everywhere, with its dainty tri-coloured blooms reminding the observer of bearded faces of Where the water had lodged making an incipient bog the sun-dew with its rosy-suckered leaves was in bud: some of the suckers were engaged in draining the life-juice of some luckless insect. which had been attracted to its doom by the gay colour. Let vegetarians remark that not all plants draw their sustenance from the soil; but though they can exist without it, some prefer animal-food. So, too, bees have an unsuspectedly high degree of civilization: when they have fulfilled Dr. Watts' lesson to children, they will fly off to a poppy-bed and indulge in an opium debauch. Often I have been able to

pick them up, when they have been quite overcome by the intoxicating juice of the pollen-grains of the seductive flower.

In one little oblong pool the lovely bog-bean was just beginning to bloom, which the wise women of certain parts of Ireland use as an unfailing medicine for many ailments. Its bitter leaves have been employed to flavour that chemical decoction which has taken the place of homely old-fashioned beer, to personate hops, though the two bitters are quite distinct in flavour. The flowers, as usual, grew out of reach, so that I was compelled to tie my knife to the end of my stick and make a sickle of it by partly opening the big blade, and I was thus enabled to secure a specimen. It may be, and is common in certain regions; but the flower is so exquisitely beautiful that I can rarely pass it by. In a clear part of the same pool were floating the green nets of the common bladderwort, which was then in bud. Like the sun-dew, that also is a carnivorous plant, the tiny trap-doors in the bladders of which open inwards. An unwary crustacean of almost imperceptible size knocks at the door. which flies open and closes behind the guest, which in a little time is absorbed by the acrid juice within. The plant has no roots and sinks to the bottom of the pool in winter, to rise again in spring and go floating about, till autumn comes to an end.

When I had reached a low hill not far from the entrance to Horn Head House, I saw that the swallows had returned to their pool, which had been considerably swollen by the storm. I was on the wrong side of my dinner, they were hunting for theirs, and their backs shone deeply blue in the slowly declining light. The sky behind me was of a deep, vivid orange, with a few pearly grey rose-fringed clouds sailing leisurely over it. The tower was in shadow save the turrets, which looked as if they had been set aflame: most of the great Head lay in shadow at the same time, though there were

yellow patches here and there on the rounded shoulders of its little hills. Though I could not see it, I could well imagine that the face of the long line of rugged cliffs would be one blaze of glory in the light of the western sun. I had gone far out of my way in crossing the sandy expanse, for I am usually too independent to carry a compass: I had little time before me, if I were to reach the hotel at the proper time for dinner, though Irish hosts are less particular in that matter than their sterner English neighbours. It may be that they are less of belly-gods, for an Irishman will forget all about his dinner if there happens to be a street-fight going on in his

neighbourhood.

I set off at a good round pace, though my legs began to tell me that I had gone far that day. Once more I enjoyed full compensation for my carelessness in choosing my path: in front the prospect opened out over the sandy dunes. There lay an expanse of golden sand with its spikes of marram lighted up into shining radiance, ending in a waste of brown bog, above which the Donegal Mountains shone forth clear and white to the east, their slopes banded with ribands of purple grey and mother o' pearl, where their screes rolled down to their base. Muckish, the two Aghlas, Errigal and Slieve Snacht were full in view, their crowns tinged with rose and towering over a russet sea of bog. Their different shapes and heights gave them a singularly impressive and picturesque appearance through the softening haze of distance. I could not help thinking of the men of old, who had wandered over and beneath them through the fir-woods, which once covered the bog. They hunted for their food, they hunted one another in battle: indeed the sound of war has seldom died down into peace in Ireland during all her long and memorable history.

There are no other mountains in the British Isles just like these: from every point of view they look

rugged and bare, precipitous and noble, though their height is far less than that of more familiar eminences. But they lose only a few feet of it, rising as they do directly from the bog. Only the loftier mountains of Sutherlandshire bear any resemblance to these striking heights, which haunt the wayfarer with a deep sense of barren sublimity. Though perhaps a good half of the county is covered with uncultivated bog, which has a sad and gloomy appearance to the eye trained to love more rural scenes, one or other of the mountain ranges is never far away, and forms a conspicuous feature of the landscape. He, however, who can draw inspiration from the wild and barren in Nature, will perceive an infinite variety of colour in these uncultivated regions, which is hidden from those whose imagination serves chiefly to show them

the obvious and less exciting.

With such a prospect to delight my eyes, I forgot my growing hunger and my fatigue. My two hardboiled eggs had evaporated like Aladdin's palace after my nine hours of all but incessant tramping over by no means easy ground. But variety counts much as a solvent of weariness: it was only during the rare intervals at which I sat down of set purpose, that I realized how far I had been, as I wound round every curve and took every angle of the long line of cliffs. The birds and rabbits had been my only companions; the only human beings whom I had seen were the crew of the coragh, and they were too far off to count. My companions on all occasions displayed a strong resentment against my presence so early in the year, when they had matters of supreme importance to occupy them; and they had no expectation of being disturbed in their nesting. They knew not that I was a bachelor and could choose my own time to visit their lonely fastnesses; in all probability had they known, they would have despised me as a degenerate featherless biped.

As it was, they had taught me almost every variety

of their calls, from the softer notes of love to the shrill screams of anger. They are ringing in my ears as I write, though I have found it quite impossible to describe them, as they haunt my memory. It was no woodland concert of harmonious warblers which had thrilled my ears. The wildness of the sea was in their cries, the sobbing of the wind shook in their voices; their notes matched with the rugged solitude, which they peopled with their thronging multitudes; their shrieks were savage as the crags along which they echoed. Though I had left them far behind me, save a few stragglers which seemed to be chasing me off from their coverts, I fancied that I could both see and hear them, so vividly had they impressed their personality upon me. More than most of Nature's wild creatures, birds have always seemed to me to have distinctive personalities of their own, sometimes more marked than those of human beings, and often enough more deeply interesting. Those which I had seen had all been dressed in their loveliest plumage, which loses its beauty when wantonly rent from the murdered bird. Nor is it easy to me to reconcile the gentleness of women with the appalling cruelty which they cause when they persist in wearing the feathers of wild birds with something of the fierce thoughtlessness of the Red Indian chiefs of an earlier time.

I could still hear the evensong of the larks soaring to heaven, yet flooding the earth with its melodies. But everywhere around me I saw multitudes of rabbits, a change of companionship by no means welcome to me. Living rabbits are too persistent gardeners for my taste; dead and in a pie, I would as soon have "the harmless necessary cat!" They afford a striking proof of the truth of the "survival of the fittest," since in spite of their weakness they have proved themselves fittest to survive. They, at the same time, give a strong negative to that favourite assertion of short-sighted

thinkers, that "force conquers all things." The rabbit, beyond doubt, has conquered Australia, as Australia knows to its cost; but certainly it has not been by force. But leaving that point let me return to the rabbits around me. The sand-hills were honey-combed with their burrows, into which they plunged headlong when they heard my step or caught sight of my almost purple face. The moment that I had passed one contingent which had temporarily disappeared, its serried ranks stole noiselessly from the darkness and renewed their

gambols behind me.

There were still many black ones amongst their countless host, waving their white scuts like flags of truce as they scurried off in all directions. One solitary albino gleamed amongst the rest like a "silver lady" amongst a crowd of cockroaches: none of the others, so far as I could see, would have anything to do with the luckless little creature; nay, sometimes they would chase it away when it showed any signs of trying to be friendly with them. At last a large fat black rabbit drove it fiercely into Mr. Stewart's grounds, where the two disappeared in the herbage. What became of them I cannot tell: the little creatures fight quite fiercely amongst themselves, using their hind legs to kick one another in a truly unorthodox manner. But neither of them showed themselves again that evening; they were probably engaged in settling their differences in the undergrowth along both sides of the drive.

If Mr. Stewart aspired to cultivate a kitchengarden, and was as kind to the rabbits as to the rock-doves, I am very sure that he would have scarcely a green leaf left for himself, so numerous were these pests of the gardener and the farmer. But they are very pretty in their attitudes and their antics. I saw one straight in front of me sitting up on its hind legs with its long ears erect, listening intently. Suddenly it heard the bark of a distant

dog which was in charge of a flock of the diminutive Donegal sheep, and it darted off to the safe shelter of its burrow. The little creature looked beautiful enough in its listening attitude: but there are far too many of its kind for man's convenience, and it persists in adding numerous members to its stock at least twice every year. It is curious that the gamekeeper and his employer, who ought to know better, persist in shooting birds of the falcon-tribe, which might capture a few head of game, but certainly earn what they steal in this kind by

keeping down the rabbits.

I soon reached the sturdy bridge over the watercourse, which virtually makes Horn Head into an island, and marched steadily down the long street of Dunfanaghy to the Stewart Arms, where I had just quarter of an hour to get a good wash and change into my slippers. Further change I would not, nay I could not, make: a knapsack is too wise to find room for the needless cumber of that useless set of garments known as a dress suit. In my eyes the wearer of it seldom looks so well as a waiter, who is more used to the costume. It is tiresome enough at home to be constrained to abide by the usages of society and make a guy of oneself because others persist in doing so. If indeed we could return to the blue coat with brass buttons, the high collar and stock, the daintily flowered waistcoat, the silk kneebreeches and stockings, the buckled shoes and elegant shirt-frill of our ancestors, there might be something in the custom and the costume. The latter would at least be picturesque, and the wearer would look less like a waiter. But to carry this absurd fashion to a holiday-resort, except on the occasion of a dance, to which the patient has gone to seek rest and freedom, has always seemed to me not only foolish but positively snobbish.

The two railway projectors and myself were the only guests: the elder of them asked me where I

had been during the storm. When I told him, he poured forth a dismal story of the plight of himself and his friend, who had been caught while they were crossing the open bog, where there was not so much as "the shelter of a haystack." They had both got wet to the skin, and for himself, like Lord Ullin in Campbell's ballad, he "had been left lamenting." Nor was he in the slightest degree comforted when I unfolded to him my simple philosophy of life; that there was always one satisfaction in getting wet through, that you cannot get any wetter, while you have always the opportunity of observing the annoyance of those who have not completed the process. Indeed he interrupted me with something that sounded like "Amen," and hinted a wish that I might imperil my eternal salvation. At the familiar monosyllable the two dogs peeped shyly into the room: but seeing their foe they gave a simultaneous yelp and vanished into the night. In due time, after a dose of "the materials," in which the elder joined because it was not at his own expense, we retired to our several chambers, they to dream of great fortunes made by the forthcoming light railway, I of the wonders which I had seen that day.

## **ERRIGAL**

And when from off the summit far I looked o'er land and waters wide, I was more joyous than the brook

That met me on the mountain side.

—Alice Milligan.

T was towards the end of May, just past the noon of a sweltering day, that I was a sweltering day. of a sweltering day, that I trudged gaily though damply along the road which wound like a long white serpent between Errigal and Dooish, on my way to the cosy Anglers' Inn at Crolly Bridge. Of my own choice I had taken the mail-car from Dunfanaghy to Falcarragh, as I intended to make the round of the twin-peaked mountain and its satellites by way of Muckish Gap, whereby I could catch a glimpse of the lovely Lough Veagh at the expense of a couple of extra miles. The Irish mail-car of that period was peculiar to the country, nor do I imagine that it has altered greatly in the lapse of thirty years. It was a side-car of the ordinary size, heaped with the heaviest possible load, attached to the slowest horse, and timed to travel the longest distance in the shortest number of hours. In addition to all these disadvantages, the driver was expected to carry and deliver exactly a host of packages of various sizes. which had not the slightest connection with the General Post Office. As a crown to his woes, he was supposed by government to take as many passengers as he could at a definite fare, while all of his friends along the road demanded promiscuous "lifts."

Larry, the driver of this particular car, was an unusually silent specimen of his class, who seemed

always to be crushed beneath the burden of his responsibility. Nothing appeared to move him as he bent forward to quicken the paces of his bareboned Rosinante, or looked stolidly at a long list of parcels, which he took out of his pocket so often that it began to grow almost illegible. He did, however, lift and turn his head to show me the famous "battering-ram" manufactured but never used for the Gweedore evictions, and finally stalled in an open shed near Falcarragh. It was an imposing-looking instrument, fashioned after a strictly classical fashion, and well calculated to do great execution upon the primitive cabins of the district. It seemed to be made of oak, or some equally hard wood, which had suffered little from the weather. Though he was in the employment of the government Larry's long face was lighted up with a sudden blaze of anger when he saw it, and he exclaimed, "Bad cess to ye for an ill-mannered bâste that ye are. May the divvle rot ye entirely!"

Just before we reached this monstrous monument of British respect for the rights of property, the mail-car came to so sudden a stop that I was all but thrown into the middle of the road. Righting myself in a moment, for I am well used to the eccentricities of the vehicle, I looked ahead to see what was the matter. A striking picture presented itself before my eyes: a tall woman clinging to a long rope tied to the right hind-leg of a huge pig, stretched their tether right across the road and effectually prevented any immediate advance. woman was screeching Gaelic oaths, the pig was answering in its own tongue: she would not, the pig could not, let go, and the pair remained in a state of equilibrium for some time. Larry, by this time thoroughly roused, fired off a torrent of evilsounding Gaelic, the woman cursed, and the pig squealed, thus performing a deafening but highly amusing trio. At last the pig shook itself free:

trailing the rope after it, homeward it scampered off at full speed, with the woman after it, still screeching her denunciations with a wonderful strength of wind. Larry looked first at them, then at me, and with just a sensation of a smile flickering round the corners of his mouth, remarked, "Thim two bastes are always

in the way of a cyar, sir!"
"Oh, Larry," I answered reproachfully; "that's the only ungallant speech I ever heard an Irishman make. Maybe you've got a grey mare in the stable! " A slight flush passed over his melancholy face; then with a self-conscious shadow of a smile he replied, "Deed and I have, sir; and if she lives as long as her tongue, begob, she'll die ould!" The last adjective was so filled with meaning, that I looked at him and then at the couple racing off in the distance. I could not help thinking that if his wife had a voice like the pig-chaser, and what she said meant as much as its awful sound implied, he had some reason for his resemblance to "the Knight of the woeful countenance." The memory of his wife's eloquence unlocked his tongue, he took up his parable, and proved himself to be naturally of a cheerful disposition, had he not been overcrowed by the female bird. After another mile I left him to his reflections, crossing his palm with silver to give them a brighter tone, shouldered my knapsack and marched off for Muckish Gap.

That was far behind now: I had passed Calabber Bridge, climbed the rising ground, and seen where Lough Veagh nestled in silent beauty beneath the lower cliffs of Dooish. Here I retraced my steps; in a short time I passed the marble church and the entrance to the Poisoned Glen, when the exquisitely pretty Dunlewey Lough came into view at the only spot where there were any living trees except ragged thorn-bushes to break the monotony of the bog, lying brown and spongy on either side of the road. The whitened roots of dead fir-trees might be seen everywhere protruding out of the dark peat, which three or four centuries ago they had covered with their green shade. In those days the last pack of wolves had found their shelter in this wild region; in these later days, only a few draggled sheep and the birds of the moorland wandered over the barren land. Where the turf had had time to soak the gnarled snags, the wood was black as ebony, and in fit condition for the carving of those diminutive pigs, which are so dear to the casual visitor to Ireland, who seems to think that the only thing peculiar to the "distressful country" is its pigs, so that he feels bound to bring back with him a specimen to show

that he has really seen its shores.

Dunlewey, with its fine house and belt of woodland, shone like a green oasis amid the prevailing expanses of brown. Farther on lay its companion, Lough Nacung, just as bare-flanked as its neighbour was thick with stately trees. Behind the church the sides of the Poisoned Glen rose precipitous, rugged, and snow-white, splashed with faint grey shadows, while high above, Slieve Snacht towered to the south, shining like polished alabaster in the sunlight. Opposite stood in solemn grandeur the huge pyamid of Errigal, though its brow was out of sight; at once an insane longing to climb it took possession of my heart, which could only be appeased by an actual fulfilment. Winding round the broad base at last I caught sight of the little public-house, which was built literally upon the southern slope of the great mountain. Like Dunlewey itself, that was also an oasis, though of another kind: it was a spring in the wilderness, though water was only used for cooking within its walls. It faced due south and was sheltered from the east, so that the patch of road in front of it was warm as a terrace in the Riviera, nor was the prospect in any high degree less picturesque, though the sea was far away. My heart rejoiced exceedingly, the moment that

my glance fell upon the inn: I was in such a stewy condition, that the last person who had met me had eyed me all over from top to toe and remarked, "Sure and your honour's just like a waterwurruks!" The saying was strictly apposite, but it was not comforting; it was rather irritating than otherwise, because it did not admit of contradiction. I have often noticed that the power of contradiction does much to alleviate temporary discomfort. It is only the Irish habit of clinching an argument with an irrefutable truism, which is apt to exasperate the natural man, especially if he happens to be in a boiling heat. All possible consolation was denied me, so on I went exuding at every pore, until I began to think that nothing would be left of me but my knapsack and a bag of promiscuous bones and trousers-buttons. I had tried my best to look pleasant at his comparison, but I had failed as signally as I did in my reply, "Well, any way I can't give you a drink!" We wished one another "Good evening," after the custom of the country when noon is passed, and wended our several ways.

Like Wordsworth's, when he "saw a rainbow in the sky," my heart leapt up, though at a very different object. Just then a thousand rainbows would not have given me as great a thrill of delight as did that little hostelry on the mountain-side. It was frequented chiefly by drovers on their way to one of the neighbouring Fairs at Dunfanaghy, Creeslough, or Letterkenny; consequently its accommodation was almost as limited as its variety of liquid refreshment. But with one only object before my mind I hastily entered its low-pitched door and received a warm welcome from the buxom hostess. In another moment I had unbuckled my knapsack from my reeking shoulders and back, where its shape had imprinted a big slop, and I looked for a place to put it down, which was not to be found so easily as might have been expected. The bar

parlour, the tap-room, the living-room, the bar itself, were all one and the same chamber, which was fairly lighted by a larger window than is usual in such places. The room itself, though somewhat low, was comparatively spacious and crowded with an odd assemblage of furniture and articles of use unknown to me.

On the right hand of the door was a roughly made frame of wood, which had been carefully grained at some previous time, but now was blistered all over. It was hung round the top and bottom with valances, and trimmed at the corners with curtains of the same faded cretonne. Under their united shadow lay a bed, evidently made of flocks, the lumps of which showed plainly through the gay, crazy quilt. On the top lay a man with all of his clothes on, including his boots and his wideawake hat, snoring like a trombone. In front of him stood a long, well-scoured table, with a form on the other side, upon which were the remains of a recent meal and a blue and white pint-mug stained at the bottom with the lees left after his drinking. He may well have been a drover, who had sold his cattle and was on his way to some distant home amongst the mountains, for his hand still clasped lovingly a big stick of considerable length and of some unknown wood. His hair was of a dark chestnut colour, and there were traces of a three-days' beard fringing his brick-red face with long stubbly bristles. I took care not to wake him, for he seemed worn out, and the blasts of his nostrils acted as a self-produced lullaby.

Not far from the hearth sat two handsome girls, innocent of shoes and stockings, busily employed in spinning the yarn, which would ultimately be woven into excellent cloth. It would first have to be dyed with the "crottle" or golden lichen, found on most of the boulders near the sea, from which several tints, so I was told, could be produced. The floor was of earth like that of any ordinary cabin, but the usual animals were conspicuous by their absence. The pigs had a mansion of their own outside, while the poultry enjoyed a little hut higher up the mountain slope. On the farther side of the truncated counter which formed the bar, were two shelves with various bottles upon them, though most of them were empty, and under them were two small casks, the contents of one of which I was destined to sample soon. Near by was the door leading to the bedroom of the family: but it was tightly shut so that I could not peep into that innermost shrine. A handsome, well-filled pot-rack occupied much of one of the walls, near which was fixed a corner cupboard of

ancient appearance and wonderful carving.

One or two prints of the Saints in gorgeous hues, a gaudy picture of the "Sacred Heart," and a life-like portrait of Father Macfadden of Derrybeg and Dunlewey were tacked on to the walls, where there was room for them, and a few chairs and stools completed the furniture of the chamber. From hooks in the ceiling hung a couple of enormous hams, a side of bacon, and many bundles of herbs. I asked myself the silent question, "Could the landlady be a fairy-doctor, who is known to use such herbs?" Dismissing the idle thought I laid down my knapsack on the table, and my blackthorn by the side of it, which was duly admired for its strength and murderous knots. At that moment my throat was like a lime-kiln; I was unreasonably eager to slake its inward drought, though I knew that I should increase my outward moisture thereby. I found that my hostess had only two kinds of drinks: the one was what she called "home-brewed beer," the other was what was locally known as "white whiskey," or in plainer language gin, of a somewhat crude, not to say ferocious, quality as its very label betrayed to the experienced observer.

"Gin and ginger" make a palatable and thirstquenching mixture: but when I discovered that

ginger-beer was utterly unknown in that lonely spot, the pallid spirit did not appeal to my parched throat. Undoubtedly it was fluid, but it would also be fiery. and I had fire enough in my veins to boil what was left of my melting flesh. Besides, I had had experience of its unforgettable musty flavour in my old East London days, and I had no mind to renew my earlier youth at this particular time. If, as is truthfully contended by its opponents, alcohol so far from being heating is in the long run cooling, the gin after all might have served my turn best. Such stimulants are certainly forbidden to explorers in search of the North Pole. But I was going up Errigal, not to the North Pole, and I stood in need of a thorough cooling there and then. But ancient prejudice had taken a deep root in my mind; resolutely though politely, I declined the "white whiskey," which was manifestly esteemed "the

liquor of a gintleman" in those parts.

I was content to sink far in the good opinion which the hostess and her daughters had previously formed of me; firmly I asked for a pint of the "home-brewed," the very name of which had a pleasant and homely sound; but I knew not what I did. This dark-hued beer was indeed "home-brewed," but it was concocted from some traditional receipt, I had almost said prescription, so like medicine was it, handed down from the times of the Danes. What the ingredients were my hostess refused to divulge. though it was entirely innocent of hops and malt: as far as I could judge, the nauseous liquid was largely flavoured with such herbs as camomile, gentian, ragwort and daisy-roots, with a liberal supply of heather. As an antiquarian I had often heard of "Danish heather-beer," and I was in honour bound to rejoice in my unexpected introduction to this old-world beverage; as a man of nice taste in such matters I wished that I had never so much as heard of the detestable drink, still

more ardently that I had never been tempted to taste it.

In fact I had great trouble in getting it down without betraying my nausea to my hostess, which I would not have done for worlds: nay, when I had succeeded with a kindly wish for the prosperity of the house, I had hardly less difficulty in keeping it where it was. But I comforted myself with the blessed thought that it would have evaporated long before I had reached the top of the mountain. Though its flavour was decidedly unpleasant, it had the faculty of quenching the thirst, or at least the desire to drink. While I was consuming my black draught, I sat down on a chair with three rickety legs and a loose one, which I managed to balance with some skill, to the manifest amazement of the landlady and her daughters, who whispered something in Gaelic to one another, ending up their speech with a burst of musical laughter. They had fully expected me to fall to the ground with the fragments of the chair around me, which were held together by some mysterious contrivance, so that it looked as sound as the rest. But in spite of the ominous creakings and the explosive cracks, I balanced myself on the chair, and the chair under me, though I dared not lean back for my life.

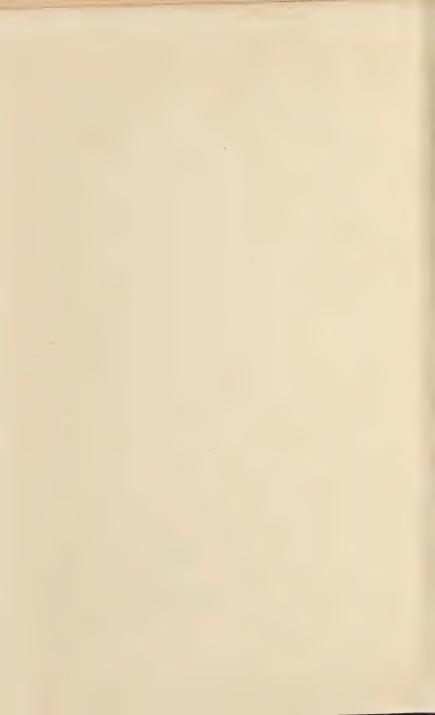
Then I asked permission to leave my knapsack where it was until my return from the summit. It was readily granted, especially when the family learned that I was not going to the great hotel at Gweedore which Lord George Hill built for anglers and sportsmen, but intended to spend some days at Paddie Gallaher's comfortable little inn. Clearly he was a friend or distant relative of theirs, for with one breath they assured me that he "was a grand man entirely, and his wife was a jew'l of a woman." Both of these eulogies in due time!

main strictly true. My hostess then gave me precise directions for my proposed ascent, advising me to turn back half a mile, if I wanted to go up by the easiest way. I listened carefully, thanked her kindly, but followed my wonted custom of taking the shortest cut to my destination. I am confident that I should have been wiser if I had followed her advice; but as she admitted that she had never been on the top herself, I was not minded to learn from her wisdom.

I chose a part of the slippery slope close to the hollow, in which the public-house stood, which was covered with grass and heather near the base, and up I began to go. The hostess and her girls came out to see me off, and to protest that I should never get up that way. But their kindly meant protestations only served to stiffen my neck, and thanking them I turned towards the mountain and continued my ascent with such vigour as the "home-brewed" had put into me. I had only two hours to spend on the top, so that I had not much time to get there, for it was nearly two o'clock when I began my climb. Though not in any way really dangerous, the ascent was uncommonly steep: in some places had I bent forward to tie a boot-lace I should almost have kissed the slope of screes in front. I soon left vegetation behind me and found the aforesaid screes distinctly slippery, and showing a perverse tendency to bear me backwards down to the base. But by careful zig-zagging and taking advantage of every stray tuft of herbage, I went on at a good round pace. I turned to look back for an instant and found that the three women had evidently gone back to their work, no doubt blessing my folly, and wondering why I was mad enough to want to reach the top.

For the rest of the way the steep slope was for the most part bare of herbage of any kind, when once the heather and the bents had been left behind.

ERRIGAL



The only interesting plants which I found during the remainder of my way up were the tiny white mountain-flax and the bear-berry, both at that time in their early bloom. What nourishment they could find in the hard, glittering quartzite rock, or the snowy pebbles of the screes, it would have been hard to say. Yet the bear-berry in particular was very flourishing in some places, and its drooping clusters of pale pink bells showed to great advantage against the white rocks. At one point I loosened accidentally a big stone, which went rolling and bounding down the mountain, gathering force at every leap. Fortunately it cannoned off a little knoll and continued its course to the westward bog, where it could harm no one. Henceforth I took extreme care not to dislodge any other loose fragments, which might well have caused serious risk to any pilgrim who

happened to be pacing the road far below.

When I had arrived beyond the reach of vegetation. I halted for a few minutes to take my bearings: it was my object to climb straight to the summit nearest to me without dipping down upon the crescent-shaped ridge which parted it from the other. Then I set out with renewed vigour, and in less than an hour from the inn I had attained the object of my desires. There I stood on the little rounded peak, just below which was a spring which was the source of a tiny streamlet trickling down to the valley with a faint tinkling sound, till it reached the solidly built bridge of the road and emptied itself into Dunlewey Lough. I sat down on the cairn and looked around me. There was hardly a breath of wind to fan my streaming brow, nor was it of any use to mop it with my great bandana, which by this time was like nothing so much as an unwrung dishclout. So I made a virtue of necessity: taking off my Norfolk of Donegal tweed I spread it on the cairn, weighting it down with big stones, that it might catch the fierce rays of the sun and become dry. I would have left it at the inn, had it not contained all my worldly wealth save the scanty clothes in my knapsack, though indeed it would have been

as safe there as upon my own body.

Then looking across at the other peak, an uneasy thought came into my mind, that it might be the higher of the two. The moment that this troublesome fancy obtruded itself upon me, I could not rest until I had put the matter to trial. Down the hollow crescent-like ridge, which in no part was more than four feet wide, and in some places less than two, I bounded, and in a few minutes I sat on the farther peak. A cairn crowned this one also; the prospect seemed to be exactly the same from both, and to this day I cannot decide whether either of them was actually higher than the other. With the restlessness of the Wandering Jew I went back to see that no one had run off with my Norfolk, which, had it happened, would have done me an ill turn. No one would have received me on the mere strength of my luggage, consisting as it did of twelve pounds weight of scantiest necessities in rather a cheap knapsack. At the time, I could see nothing more threatening than a goat, which came within a few yards distance to stare at me, and finding I was a stranger, bounded off with an indignant bleat.

When I reached the middle of the ridge I paused to look down the screes on the northern side. The spectacle was sublime, and to dizzy heads appalling: the screes seemed to fall almost perpendicularly into the wild and lonely Altan Lough, which lay in the cleft between themselves and the precipitous Aghla More, or Wee Errigal. In the clear air the sapphire waters seemed not far away; nay it appeared as if I could have dropped a stone straight into their blue depths. Between the two mountains, and almost overhanging the lake, lies that magnificent series of precipices known as the Bheagy, which I have never

crossed, but which filled me with a passionate longing to do so, when I gazed down upon them lying at least a thousand feet below me. Here the screes are fully as high as those of Wastwater, and not a whit less impressive: with the deeply enclosed lake beneath them, they presented a scene of desolation only surpassed by Lough Corruisk in the Isle of Skye itself, and there was no hotel to banish the solitude.

Altan Lough is about a mile and a half long, and nowhere more than a third of a mile broad, so that the narrowness of the cleft can be realized. bottom shelves towards the north-eastern margin, where the water is deepest. Nor are there any of those expanses of gravel, in which trout find so much of their food: hence in this lake the fish are small and poor, though there is said to be a vast multitude of them. Whether seen as I looked down into its dark waters from the narrow ridge two thousand feet above them, or from the foot where it pours forth the clear river, which flows past Falcarragh on its way to the sea, the lonely lake is equally wild, equally desolate. Scarcely a blade of grass waves along the margins of its rock-bound basin; not a tree is to be seen in its immediate neighbourhood. It might well be the dwelling of some mysterious Hydra, or of any water-monster corresponding to that of Lerna in Irish fairy lore. Even the flaming sunlight illuminated the surrounding crags, but left the lake itself darkly, deeply blue, save where the river bounded from it, as though rejoicing to escape.

I stood long gazing down into the depths of the abyss from the heights above, and caught something of the joy of the chamois, when it bounds along the ledges of its native mountains. On the other side a fairer scene expanded to the view, though it was partially blocked by the rounded back of Dooish. Yet even this was bare and rugged for

the most part, too majestic indeed for the calmersouled lover of the rural landscape. Retracing my steps I soon regained the summit which I had climbed first: there I sat down to spend, literally, some "melting moments," while I surveyed the marvellous prospect which unfolded itself to my eager eyes. Though of no great height, Errigal towered above all of the neighbouring mountains: Muckish. a little more than two hundred feet lower, lay like a great back sloping gently upwards toward the north, its hollows and crevices flooded by the dazzling light, and its numerous streams like lines of silver finding their way to the valleys beneath. Dooish, though it hid Lough Veagh below its precipitous eastern flank, seemed completely dwarfed, and the white rocks on its summit gleamed like snow

through its meagre curtain of green herbage.

The air was so clear that the distant landscape appeared to lie almost at my feet. The whole of County Donegal was in sight from Lough Foyle to Donegal Bay. Surely there never was so fantastically cloven a coast-line outside of Norway, where the scenery no doubt is cast in a grander mould. even the noble coast of the west of Scotland is more curiously cut into quaint leaf-like patterns. Bay followed bay, inlet trod on the heels of inlet, cape rose after cape, patch of golden sand succeeded to patch, island floated next to island in bewildering profusion, all deeply outlined on the blue Atlantic, which in its turn blended with the blue sky. of the crag-bound coast which rises steeply over its belt of orange sand, was hidden from me, though here and there lines of deeper grey told of shattered rock and frowning precipice. Tory and its three attendant islets, the Rosses with Aranmore and a host of islands gradually decreasing into bare crags, the ruddy tint of the so-called Bloody Foreland, rivers and streams in hundreds, lakes in thousands crowded the scene, which was dotted over with the white cottages and the blue smoke of distant towns

and villages.

Almost the whole of County Derry, looking vividly green with its woods and fields, County Antrim as far as the height of Knocklayd which hid Fair Head from me, lay stretched out like a flower-garden of richly blended hues. Beyond smiled the ocean, where the white cliffs of Rathlin Island, the Scottish Cantyre, Islay, and the expressively named Paps of Jura shone far away on the horizon, draped in a mantle of palest blue. The Mourne Mountains in County Down, with Slieve Donard and Slieve Bingian overtopping the rest, rose on the extreme verge of the eastern sky, chastened with the softening light of distance. It was a truly amazing landscape, jewelled with intensely blue lakes, embroidered with shining rivers, cleft by mountain ranges like huge waves suddenly frozen into stone. High above all, the sun blazed in the full majesty of his power, heightening the lights and deepening the shadows into one vast panoramic picture with an infinite variety of form and colour.

Southward stood the rounded tops of the Blue Stack Mountains, gaily tinged with a delicate purple. Below them Donegal Bay stretched its blue length along the dark coast-line of County Mayo and the deep bay of Sligo. The irregular shape of the Mullet and the mountains of the Island of Achill faded into the sea towards the south-west: even the bald crown of Croagh Patrick lifted its broad head, and two pinnacles behind the sapphire cone of Nephin, looking like a sharply outlined silver cloud. Away to the east of the sacred mountain, Benbulben and the Ox Mountains drew a straight belt of pearly grey across the sky, bordered by a dull green shadow of dim woodland. Nearer, and across the bay, the long back of Slieve Liag hid its terrific precipices from sight: the lower mountains over Glencolumbkille were radiant with the splendour of a perfect day.

Gweebarra estuary, the greater gulf of Loughros More, parted by Loughros Point from the lesser inlet of Loughros Beg, seemed almost as near as Slieve Snacht itself. Beyond stood sheer out of the water the long line of precipitous cliffs, which come to an end at the red sand of Maghera; they were lighted up into a mother o' pearl lustre blotted with patches of darker shadow, which robbed them of their terrors and tinged them with a tender loveliness of their own.

No matter which way I turned, my heart thrilled within me with a sense of awe blended with exquisite delight. I longed to be one great seeing eye, one unforgetting memory, that I could take in all and keep it fast in recollection, so that when I was no longer able to climb the steep mountain it might cheer me with its wonder and beauty. Even the cheerless expanses of brown bog immediately below me no longer looked monotonous, but were lighted up into a matchless variety of shades, which baffle all description. The green splashes of treacherous moss were conspicuous from that airy height, and shot the russet bog-grass with large patches of brilliant emerald. The sheep browsing upon the scanty herbage looked no bigger than fleecy mice, as they nibbled peacefully at such grass as they could find. Far down below I could hear the shrill barking of a dog, which sounded thin and faint as a voice from another world, as it rose in air. From some unseen farm I caught the proud challenge of the "bird of gladness," which was taken up by another, and again by another, so that the loneliness of that bare summit seemed to grow all the lonelier. No other sound vexed the deep stillness save the rustling of the tiny streamlet down the sheer slope, and the merry song of the sky-lark, which was higher in air than my lofty seat.

But I could read the story of the people, of whose wild and picturesque land I could see so much. Who

could be seated on that sky-kissed summit with his imagination unstirred by the glory of the scene? Who could wonder that in the long, dark, winter nights, when the wind roared loud and the rain fell fast, the men and women gather round the peat-smoke of the cabin to listen to the eloquent tales of the seannachie? That true successor of the ancient bards tells them the traditions of their ancestors, the stories of the beautiful fairy folk, of the wise women and witches of the present, of the heroes who lived and died for their country in the past. I could see the eager faces of the listeners and their rapt attention, while the children who ought to have been long asleep, sat up trembling in bed to rejoice in the tales. I looked toward Glencolumbkille, and I seemed to see Columba, Saint and missionary, moving about his native county, planting churches or monasteries wherever he went, and last of all, setting out in his tiny boat over the stormy sea to evangelize the western kingdom of the Scots, and its eastern neighbour the realm of the Picts.

I thought of the O'Donnell chieftains, distinguished on many a field of battle at home and abroad; the handsome figures of the "Red Hugh" and Owen Roe O'Neil, with the statesman-like features of the great Tyrconnell, seemed to float past me, as I gazed upon the land which was dearer than life to them. Could I be mistaken, or did I actually see the timeworn tower of Kilmacrenan, where Columba had taken the first steps of his training for the priesthood? Could that dark, low-lying mass of stone in the midst of the darker bog be the Rock of Doon, whereon the O'Donnell chieftain was inaugurated in former times, rising gloomily over the far-famed holy well? But here I am afraid that my imagination was playing me a scurvy trick and showing me objects which were hidden by a spur of Dooish. I knew well enough where they ought to lie, and I fancied that I could see them, bright with the memory of past traditions.

But there at least was Lough Swilly, or "the Lake of Shadows," stretching its sinuous course, overlooked by the Grianan of Ailleach, or "summer palace" of the kings of northern Ireland. There like the teeth of a huge saw the Devil's Backbone parted it from the lonely Mulroy Bay, with its far more beautiful Irish name of Knockalla, or "the mountain of the echo."

There lay the Poisoned Glen, its gleaming rocks snow-white, grim, sheer: I fancied that I could see Balor lurking behind the crag, when his grandson, MacKineely, thrust his spear through the envenomed eye, and so gave its ill-omened name to that savage recess. I could see the "little red men" riding on their enchanted steeds to work revenge on any who might have insulted or injured them. I could picture the "good people" weaving their mystic dance to the tune of their weird and unearthly music; I could hear the banshee wailing with the foreknowledge of the imminent death of some member of the family to which she was attached. I could imagine Columba in his coragh following his mystic staff across the stormy sound of Tory, to plant the Cross in that barren land. I could see the old church at Ray, where the huge cross which he is said to have cut in Tory, lies broken into four pieces. I could see Falcarragh with its discarded battering-ram, and far out at sea I could just catch a glimpse of the brown sails of the fishing fleet, hardly bigger than butterflies' wings, provided by the wiser counsel of the Congested Districts Board.

A whole pageant of the past mingled with my thoughts of the present, transforming what I saw into a phantasmagoria of wonderful beauty and pathos. Then I saw, or thought I saw, how the very lie of the land had divided its people into warring factions, which persist to this day. I could gather something of the unconquered spirit of the modern Irishman, his chief inheritance from the past, which

has so long stood in the way of those who have sought to govern him from the outside. His shapely mountains, his blue lakes, his winding rivers, his vast deserts of quaking bog, his towering cliffs and lonely inlets, his innumerable islands and his ancient faith are dear to him as his heart's blood. It is even said and believed of him by many of his kindred, that his unquiet spirit cannot rest if his body be not laid in his native earth. When Cromwell had put to the sword three hundred of the Walshes after the sack of Drogheda, their kinsmen bore them straight across the island, that their bones might rest at last in the Dominican Abbey in Athenry. Their monument may be seen to-day to tell of the Irishman's deathless

attachment to the place where he was born.

Perhaps no other nation keeps in memory so faithfully the traditions and struggles of the past: this wild western county has been the very centre of both; the very names of the villages, peaks, rivers and islands are redolent of the memory of the past, when Ireland was the home of the learned, when her missionaries and scholars found their way not only to Scotland, but to many parts of Europe besides. Then, indeed, she was the "Island of the Saints," if now she is "the distressful country"; then it may be that Brandan, Saint and voyager, was actually the first European to set foot on the shores of Florida. recalled the Books of Kells and Durrow, penned and illuminated by the careful hands of Irish Monks, and still unsurpassed in their own kind. The National Library contains amongst its choicest treasures the "Annals of the Four Masters," which remains the most remarkable collection of national tradition and history in western Europe. I remembered the exquisitely carved crosses which I had seen in so many places, and it seemed to me that Ireland was indeed a land of the past, though none can say what future may yet lie before her.

All these thoughts and more flashed across my

mind, as I sat upon that lonely peak with near upon a third part of Ireland within my sight. I felt like one possessed, or held in the thraldom of a beautiful dream: for long I could not tear myself away from the fascination of that wide landscape engirdled with its golden sand and the deep blue of the mighty ocean, throbbing with its inspiring traditions and its stirring history, its witches and fairies, its heroes and Saints. I felt like the eagle, which was wont to haunt these heights within the memory of living man: I fancied that I saw the great bird circling through the cloudless blue of the infinite vault of heaven, and stooping suddenly upon its unseen prey. I might have been fairy-struck, so swiftly did the minutes tread upon one another's heels in their headlong course. I had been two hours seated on that desolate height, and they seemed but as two moments. The air was thronged with phantomforms, the fairy music of the past rang in my ears; the darker present faded from me like the dew before the morning sun.

But it was time to take my downward course; I turned to put on my Norfolk, when I saw something twinkling amongst the pure white stones of the cairn. It turned out to be a pocket-compass, the needle of which had lost its fulcrum and refused to point in any direction. I know not how, but the sense of solitude left me, the present rushed upon me with its more commonplace physical needs, my dreams vanished into thin air. I remembered what I had completely forgotten, that I must make my way at once to Crolly Bridge, if I were to arrive in reasonable time for dinner. I usually find it easier to climb up than to go down a mountain: Virgil has sung with much truth, Facilis descensus Averno, or if it be preferred, "the descent to hell is easy!" As far as I purposed and knew, I was not going so far down: the bottom of the valley had a securer foothold than the "bottomless pit," that was enough for me. The deeper descent might have presented a more extensive scope for discovery, had it been possible to return, as did the "pious Æneas." But I had at least six miles to tramp before I could sit down to a full meal, and I had no wish to go any farther.

The screes were demoniacally slippery; sometimes I was carried down so fast, that I was forced to throw myself upon my back to stop my wild career. The rounded pebbles had a "permanent hardness" differing far from that chemical property of water; though white themselves, I have good reason to believe that they dotted my back with a considerable number of bluish black wheals, though I could not see them. But I pressed on as steadily as I could, until at length I was safe on the green slope. Until I had reached firmer ground, I felt like a mountainsheep, though I was by no means so sure-footed: every now and then an almost irresistible longing came upon me to take a leap forward, which needed some force of will to conquer. I could hear the pebbles trickling down behind me at almost every step: sometimes they hit my boots which sent others flying down before me, sometimes they raced past me to the road beneath. Most of them were small; but sometimes I loosened a large round stone, which actually hit the back wall of the little public-house, so straight had I steered my course in its direction.

At last I caught sight of it and the road and the lakes beyond it: my hostess had come out, realizing that I was on my way down by the unexpected impact of the stone, which she said, and I believed her, had just missed her back window, and alarmed her not a little. She imagined that I myself was coming down in a manner more expeditious than elegant: hence when she saw me half-way down the green slope, she raised a joyful cry of welcome. I answered her more like a man awakened from a dream than a living being, for I had not yet mastered and stored in their proper brain-cells the

thoughts which had filled my mind so long. In a few more minutes I stood by her side like a bottle of sedimentary medicine, thoroughly well shaken by my rapid descent and quite ready for a draught. She welcomed me once more into her house with that cheerful cordiality which lends a grace to the homeliest manners: her daughters by this time had donned their best clothes, and looking very handsome, joined in their mother's greeting with kindly smiles. The drover had gone on his way, the bed had been shaken up and arranged, so that the crazy quilt looked as well as such monstrosities can do. A homely cloth was set on one end of the table, the crumbs were swept off from the rest, and the ringmark of the pint-pot had disappeared. My hostess brought out from somewhere unknown a large flat cake not unlike the Yorkshire "turn-over muffin," about two inches thick. With a broad smile she invited me to partake, remarking in the same breath, that "it was not fit for the likes of me." When I tasted it, I agreed with her, though I was not rude enough to say so. I discovered with the first bite that it had been baked of Indian meal without a touch of leaven. I felt like a Jew eating his Passover-bread, though that ancient bakemeat is usually accompanied by something more appetizing than "white whiskey "and water. The cake was so thoroughly satisfying, that two mouthfuls of it would have sufficed to allay the cravings of my appetite for some time. But I knew that I must keep my repugnance to myself, if I were not to put an ungrateful slight upon her well-intentioned kindness. Once more I made a virtue of necessity: with no small difficulty I contrived to masticate a large enough piece to content her anxious mind. The intolerable taste is still in my mouth whenever I recall that detestable cake, which is well-matched with the "home-brewed beer" in its combination of disagreeable flavours.

As I have hinted, I washed down my portion with "white whiskey" and water, whereby I went up several degrees in her estimation, no less than in that of her girls. But I could not help feeling a profound pity for the peasantry, so many of whom never taste any other kind of bread except on the rare occasions of a village-festival. As I was strapping my knapsack upon my shoulders, my hostess and the girls gave me many messages to carry to " Paddy Gallaher and the misthress," which I promised faithfully to deliver, and forgot most of them before the end of the first mile. But I did convey their warmth and their meaning some two hours later, when I got to Crolly Bridge. I thanked the good woman warmly for her courtesy, and bidding her and her daughters a hearty "Good evening," I set forth on the Gweedore road as freshly as if I were beginning my walk for the day. It is true that my legs took some time to get accustomed to the level road, so shaken had they and I been by the rapidity of our united descent. But they bore me swiftly along by the margin of the melancholy-looking Lough Nacung.

The fresh air of the mountain had filled my lungs and purified my blood: the solitary thoughts which had been my companions, had invigorated my mind, so that I felt like a new man. The bog lay on my right, Lough Nacung on my left, nestling beneath its low, bare, boggy-topped hills, its smooth waters rippled ever and anon by some rising trout. I often turned to revel in the majesty of Errigal and its companion mountains: I looked up at both of the peaks, upon one of which I had sat for two hours, and I sang to myself with the "Village Blacksmith" of Longfellow, but to a tune "of my own composing,"

"Something attempted, something done Has earned a night's repose."

In rather more than an hour's time I came to Bryan's Bridge, I think it is called possibly after Brian

Boru, which spans the beautiful Clady River, at this point wide and deep. I leaned over the parapet and saw a goodly company of fine salmon not long come in, and lying in deep water after their fashion with

their noses facing the current of the stream.

Behind towered Errigal like a great white cone just flushed with faintly purple screes, with Wee Errigal peeping over its shoulder. The two mountains, the greater and the lesser, presented a magnificent picture of wildness, yet of peace, which will not soon fade from my mind. Just at this moment there was a stir amongst the salmon, which leaped away on this side and on that: a boat made its appearance from some hidden creek in the stream, moving slowly towards the Gweedore Hotel. It contained a part of anglers, evidently rejoicing in their good catch: they laughed and sang and chaffed one another with the highest spirits. The head of the party, catching sight of me, offered to take me on to the hotel. I thanked him and remarked that I was going on to Crolly Bridge. I shall never forget the look of profound pity which spread over his features when he learned my destin-Manifestly he thought that he had made a mistake in addressing me at all: when he turned to his companions and repeated my information, their mirth faded from their countenances, and that stony look came over them, which an Englishman puts on when he wishes to assert his own measureless superiority in birth or wealth to one less fortunate, as he thinks him.

I was intensely amused with their conceit, and congratulating myself that I was not destined to meet them at dinner in the insanity of evening dress, I turned to the left and soon found myself at Crolly Bridge. I was greatly attracted by the fine troutstream, no less than by the huge granite boulders, which lay scattered everywhere along this part of the road; it seemed as if a party of giants had just left off playing a game of quoits. But I had little

time to examine these just then, had I had the inclination: mine host of the Anglers' Inn stood in the road, evidently on the look out for promiscuous visitors, and a broad smile lighted up his handsome features when he espied my approaching figure. It was true that snail-like I was carrying all my belongings upon my back, so that I might easily have been taken for a pack-man. But Mr. Gallaher made no such mistake: with a stately courtesy he lifted his cap and saluted me as respectfully as if I had been the Lord Lieutenant himself. My own cap just then was in my pocket, so that I could not return his salutations with equal dignity; but I did my best under the circumstances, and he was content.

I had not forewarned him of my coming, and it was not wise to take unawares one who-dwelt so far from the beaten track of tourists. Fortunately he happened to have another guest staying with him at the time; consequently he was well prepared to receive, and what was of far more importance, to feed me. I knew that there would be an ample supply of drinkable fluids: but that would not have been enough for my wolf's appetite. While I was asking for a bedroom, I took the opportunity of having a good look at him. He was a tall, broad-shouldered man, with the blackest of hair, but that dark blue eye which is so peculiarly Irish. I engaged my room for several nights, and we shook hands once more on the bargain. When we had finished this part of the business, I told him of the hostess of the little public-house, gave him as many of the messages as I could remember, and repeated her praise of the "misthress" and himself. His whole being seemed to brighten with pleasure: calling out the "misthress" he repeated to her what I had said, bade her lay another cover for "the gintleman, and take me up to see my room."

Before we went into the house, he asked me if I

would mind waiting for the other guest who was out fishing in Lough Anure. I was quite willing to wait for a dozen guests, though I longed to partake of something to take the taste of that slice of Indian meal bread out of my mouth, which still stuck to the sides of my inner man. I had time to look more closely at the "misthress," who appeared to have well deserved the praises showered upon her. She was a tall and stately woman, matching well with her husband, who carried herself with the ease of an empress: kindness shone in her blue eyes and rested on her smiling mouth. She was not handsome, but comely and neat in all her ways, and wearing a spotlessly clean white apron. Moreover, she had to the full what I have always deemed a supreme accomplishment in woman, she was excellently skilled in plain cookery. In my turn I felt profound pity for the guests of the great hotel, who would indeed fare sumptuously every day but be compelled to observe the minutest proprieties.

She led me upstairs into the coffee-room, into which two small bedrooms opened, each with a narrow passage leading to a window, and dividing two beds. They were delightfully like ship's berths, with an important difference; they knew how to keep still during the night. Over each bed was a picture of the Virgin in gorgeous raiment tacked to the wall, while one common wash-hand stand with a couple of ewers, basins and other necessities stood under the window. It was covered with a cloth of fine white linen fringed with the beautiful crochet-lace of the county. The pillow-slips were adorned in a similar fashion; like the sheets they were finely bleached and spotlessly clean. As I found later they had been bleached in the open air with some fragrant herb such as woodruff, which was supposed to produce sleep. had no need of any such sedatives when I came to test their virtues four or five hours afterwards: I had drunk in the freshness of the mountain-air that day,

which still stirred my blood through my veins; I had had, too, that best of all forms of exercise, walking, which is being gradually forgotten in these lazy days of motors and the like.

By the time I had left my chamber and stepped into the coffee-room, the other guest came in with a fine white trout which he had succeeded in landing as the sole trophy of a long day on the lake. But it had given him great pleasure in playing it skilfully, and it furnished us with a sound foundation for our dinner. He did not give its weight; neither will I, bearing in mind the knowing definition of an angler, "He goeth forth in the morning, he returneth home in the evening; the smell of whiskey is upon him, and the truth is not in him!" The moment that I clapped my eyes upon him, I recognized him, though I had not seen him since the days of my boyhood, when he had done me a good turn which remained fresh in my mind. Greatly to his surprise I addressed him by his name, asked how his brother was, and recalled other memories of his old home. He had been born in a little Lancashire town quite familiar to me, though at this time he was a Professor in the University of Glasgow. He had run a career of great distinction, which had begun with few, if any, advantages: but he had conquered all difficulties with an indomitable courage and now he sat serenely upon the top of that metaphorical tree, which differs as widely as possible from the notorious American gum-tree sacred to "Silas Fixings."

When I made myself known to him, he remarked with no striking originality, "It's a little world after all. Who would have dreamed of meeting you here, so far from the track of ordinary holiday-makers?" Without waiting for my answer to his truism or his question, he gave me a second warm grip of the hand, following it up with more questions than I could answer at once. He was ready for dinner in a few minutes, the white trout was cooked to a nicety

almost at the same moment, and we were soon happily employed in discussing its juicy fillets and the memories of old times. Chops, no less juicy, followed, which are always excellent in this part of Ireland, and the largest rice pudding which I have ever seen, and appeared to be served in a dish fully as big as a washing-basin. Its magnitude did not scare us: shamelessly we ate almost half of it, till like the elder Mr. Weller's young friend at the tea party, "we were a-swelling wisibly before each other's wery eyes!" A nugget of cheese concluded our repast—I dare not use smaller words to express that Gargantuan meal—then we pushed back the table and seated ourselves in front of a cheerful peatfire, which was by no means unwelcome, for the night had set in chilly and misty, as often happens in May. Next we took out our old crusted pipes, and began to cross-question one another about the persons and

happenings of twenty years ago.

We were deep in the midst of a series of reminiscences highly interesting to ourselves, when, not greatly to our delight, a knock was heard at the door and in walked the parish priest of Annagary. had one of the kindest faces that I had ever seen, even in Ireland, where they are not rare. He was a thoroughly well-built man with strong arms and the sturdy legs of the true Irishman. His fine, open features, his bright blue eyes and his golden hair would have won him a welcome anywhere, save perhaps at a fight in a Fair. Immediately upon his appearance, Mr. Gallaher in person very respectfully and unbidden brought in "the materials," which we duly compounded into that deleterious fluid vulgarly known as toddy. Soon under its genial influence we were enjoying a "three-handed crack," which utterly belied the musty old proverb, "Two's company, three's trumpery." His Reverence informed us that he was not a political priest, and both of us thought the better of him for that. He was

truly, and not only in name, the "father of his flock," wise, kindly, and devout, spending most of his small means upon the poor, and especially attentive to the sick. "There," he said, "ye can't go wrong."

A year or two ago he had been in charge of the faithful few in Tory Island, and he preferred its wild solitudes and its hearty fisher-folk to his present more comfortable quarters and larger parish. He had a deep strain of poetry in his nature, which had inspired him to find out all of the traditions of the island, many of which he told me with admirable simplicity and a firm conviction of their truth. Some of these will appear in due course, but not in his matchless way of telling them. As I listened I was smitten with a keen desire to cross the dangerous Sound: but the weather broke the very day on which I had intended to set out, so that not even a coragh would have faced the boisterous fury of the waves, though I should have been well content to make the attempt in that frail but delightful craft. As we talked, we forgot all our fatigue, though the Professor had been fishing all day, and I had tramped at least twenty miles Irish, to say nothing of my ascent of Errigal. He gave me a vivid account of the murder of Inspector Martin, of which he expressed his abhorrence but temperately enough.

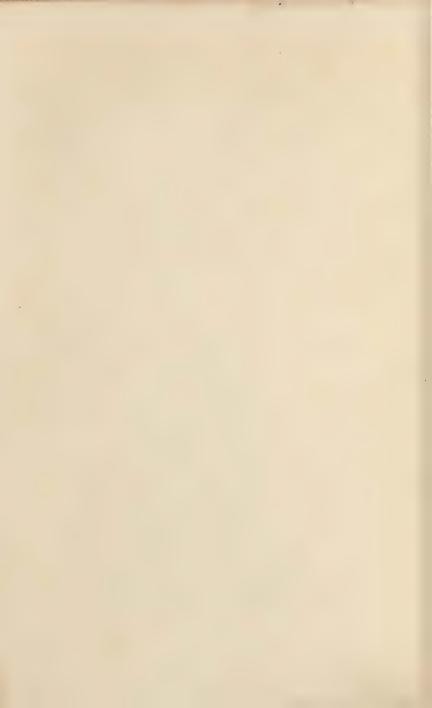
This narrative he followed by the true story of Father MacFadden, whom he evidently admired as a parish priest, but condemned for failing to restrain his flock from the murder. In this way time flew along, till the good priest returned to Annagary, leaving the Professor and myself to seek the soothing arms of Morpheus. We needed no rocking that night: ten hours in that pure air were more potent than many a sleeping-draught, nor did either of us wake till seven the following morning. The clouds which had been threatening during the night may well have emptied themselves somewhere near, for the sun rose on a magnificently clear morning.

There was no bath in the inn: we took our tub in the cool Crolly River, greatly disturbing the timid trout but hugely enjoying ourselves. Then over a hearty breakfast washed down by the always excellent Irish tea, I told my companion of my ascent of Errigal with some of the thoughts it had called up in my mind. To my serious regret he was going home that day, and the long drive to Letterkenny lay before him.

I rode with him as far as Glenveagh Bridge, for I was minded to see the view of Errigal from Ballygeeha Gap before I left that part of the country. Mr. Gallaher drove us swiftly past the little publichouse: the whole family came out to welcome us, but we had not time to stop just then, and we contented ourselves with uttering loud salutations and waving our handkerchiefs till we were out of sight round the corner of Errigal. At the gates of Glenveagh Castle, we parted; nor have I ever seen the genial Professor since, though I have heard something of his doings and the high regard in which he is held by his students. If, as is often contended, the greatness of human pleasures consists chiefly of their unexpectedness, I had certainly had one of the greatest pleasures of my life in the unexpected renewal of an old friendship after the lapse of twenty years or thereabouts. I stood watching the car out of sight, waving my hands like the once famous "Nancy Lee" of the fine old song, before setting out on my forward way. A turn in the road bore them quickly out of sight on their journey to St. Conwall's town, and I entered the gates in front of me.

The road ran pleasantly along the margin of Lough Veagh towards the castle and glen. At the lower end of the lake I passed several islands, one larger and better wooded than the rest. Hither, during the latter half of the thirteenth century, the great O'Donnell chieftain of that date was borne to die. As he lay with his life ebbing fast, he heard

LOCH VEAGH



that his troop was being beaten by the foe. commanded his attendants to lay him in his coffin and carry him into the midst of his fighting men. When he reached the spot, he called out with all but his latest breath, "Here am I with you; let no man dare to retreat; fight on and win the victory." His men, with the coffin and the dying man leading them on, rallied and defeated the foe with heavy slaughter. They raised the shout of victory: O'Donnell lifted up his head and saying, "So we have won the day," he breathed his last. When his men looked into the coffin and perceived that their veteran leader had passed away, the shouts of victory were turned to the keen of his funeral. They took him to St. Conwall's Abbey, where he was buried with almost royal pomp. Such is the spirit which animated the Irish

chieftains of the past.

After looking with deep interest at the island, I left behind me, as quickly as I could, that ugly modern building, the castle, which rises from the margin of the lovely lake and to no small extent robs it of its solitary beauty. It is singular what wretched attempts modern architects make, when they are called upon to build a castle. The interior of their building may be far more comfortable than the windy chambers of the older structure; but the exterior commonly combines the ugliness of a workhouse with the pretentious grandeur of a private asylum. Not a tower, not so much as a turret, has anything approaching the antique grace of those which our forefathers fashioned centuries ago. The windows of the modern abortion do, no doubt, admit more light; but their mullions are ungainly rather than massive. and their shape is clumsy rather than impressive. Yes, I was glad to put Glenveagh Castle behind me as soon as possible, that I could gaze on the lake unvexed by the annoyance of that intrusive incubus. The lake itself is almost four miles in length, and nowhere more than half a mile in breadth, so that it

has a fine effect as it lies in its deep hollow, while its surface is only one hundred and forty-five feet above the level of the sea.

The day was as glorious as the one on which I had climbed Errigal: a gentle breeze had borne the clouds away; thousands of birds were swelling their thrilling chorus. The western margin of the lake was overhung by precipitous cliffs, twelve hundred feet at their highest point, which found their way upwards to Dooish Mountain. The eastern shore sloped far less steeply to the lake and was covered nearly to the top with a gay robe of woodland, in which were to be seen many Alpine plants and trees, such as yews and The dainty flush of spring was on the trees; green, golden, ruddy brown, their bursting buds and fresh young leaves twinkled in the gentle gale. The stir of spring was in the air as I walked through a beautiful avenue, shaded by the exquisite green of the loveliest season of the year. The bracken was lifting its orange crosiers high above the bright green grass; the great baskets of the shield fern rose sturdily under the trees; the lesser celandine was lighting its golden stars above its glossy leaves to shine on shady banks; pale primroses in tens of thousands stared open-eyed at the fairy-like tracery of the twigs quivering overhead.

Far off a throstle raised its defiant challenge, seeming to say, "Summer is coming, summer is coming, hurrah, hurrah!" which was taken up by another, then by a multitude, until the whole glen rang with their joyous harmony. From deeper recesses of the woodland the coyer "ousel-cock with orange-tawny bill" uttered its mellow note, awakening the answering carols of a host of its kind. Lesser choristers took up the glad spring chorus, piping with all their hearts to the bright sun: quite close to me a tiny olive-green willow-wren shook the air with its shrill ditty. Chaffinches took up one another's sweet little song with its staccato flourish

at the end. Great titmice sawed away from their hidden covert with a persistency which seemed likely to saw down a whole fairy forest of undergrowth. Robins were everywhere, sometimes in angry conflict, sometimes singing their blithe tune with a richness which it never has in the winter months. Myriads of starlings were murmuring in a vain endeavour to mimic the resounding notes of the throstles. It was a complete concert of bird-music, to which the breeze sighed a soft accompaniment, while the quiet waters answered with their faint plashing upon the reedy margin of the lake. There a flight of swallows skimmed through the air, making it ring with their

shrill twittering.

The glowing sun fired the slow ripples of the placid water, breaking into countless sparks of living radiance. An early tortoiseshell butterfly flitted lazily before me, ever and anon dropping upon the road to spread its burnished wings fair as a flower shaken loose from its stem. A faint fragrance floated on the air, unclouded by smoke, uncorrupted by noxious vapour. It breathed forth from innumerable bluebells looking like a blue haze under the shadow of the lofty trees. Save near the castle and the keeper's lodge solitude reigned supreme: I was alone with Nature, who unlocks her deepest secrets most surely to the solitary wayfarer, whose soul is sympathetic to her soothing caress. shadows dappled the road, where the sun was able to pierce the mantle of opening and opened leaves. Some distance from the castle, a narrow and precipitous corrie with its brawling stream, ended in the lake. It was shaded by lofty trees, made musical by a great throng of birds; its steep slopes were patterned by a bewildering confusion of flowers and ferns, and the babbling of the waters gave an indescribable sense of coolness and harmony.

There, for the first time, I found the uncommon "hay-scented fern" (Lastræa recurva), with every

pinnule of its chiselled fronds pointing upward to the leafy arcade. The beech fern grew in golden green clumps; the daintier oak fern lifted up its pale triangular blades from a stem slender and black as that of the maiden-hair itself. On the mossy stones bedewed by the passing stream, single plants of that tiniest of ferns with the longest of Latin names stretched its translucent fronds to the light. English it is simply the "filmy fern," in Latin it bears the sonorous name of Hymenophyllum unilaterale, which actually occupies a larger space in print than the frond itself. Bluebells in profusion, tall red campions, silvery stitchworts and an occasional kingcup adorned either side of the brook, while tinyleaved ivy, its dark green shot with white, festooned the larger blocks of stone. Great clumps of buckler fern were still unfurling their finely cut leaves, while the gay golden saxifrage shone in an emerald

background of liverwort.

It is strange that Irish fancy never peoples such a fairyland of Nature as this with the mysterious dances of the fairy folk. They are fondly believed to haunt the raths of a former race under the shadow of the ancient hawthorn-trees which often flourish within them. It may be that there the "good people" have more room for their gambols, more favourable opportunities of snaring unwary passersby. But the birds were wiser, as their music showed. which rose and fell in tuneful cadence with the pure joy of the gladsome spring. One diminutive wren on a low bush almost within my reach lifted up its ringing voice and piped with all the vigour of the cornet soloist, but entirely free from his selfconscious antics. Though not beloved by the Irish youth, and ceaselessly persecuted on account of an ill-founded legend, here at least the merry mite was able to cock its perky little tail in perfect safety, and it made the corrie ring with its lively roundelay. Its nest would not be far away; but I did not trouble to

look for it, I would rather have the cocky little fellow's blithe minstrelsy near me, than fill its heart with needless terror.

Gradually the woodland began to grow thinner as I neared the head of the lake, where the open glen lay in front with its swirling river and the keeper's lodge a little way off. From the western cliff fell a thin waterfall with one momentary halting-place in a leap of more than a thousand feet. It was meagre enough now: but I could well imagine how tremendous would be its clamour when it swept down from its home above swollen into a torrent by the long rains and heavy storms of winter. The road wound slowly round the eastern slope on its way to the end of the col, its surface gradually growing rougher and rougher as it climbed the edge. Here and there the winter downwash from the hillside had hurled large portions into the bare valley beneath, so that it was no longer passable even by so light a vehicle as a side-car. The scene was solitary beyond expression, the woodland trees were left behind, only the lark soared upwards, singing as it went, till it could scarcely be seen against the dazzling glare of the sky.

Yet once the glen had been filled with homely life, and the humming of the Irish pipe could often be heard waking the echoes at nightfall. That was before the terrible evictions of 1861 were ruthlessly carried out by the late proprietor, Mr. John George Adair, acting under a fatal mistake, or series of mistakes. Then the glen was thronged with cabins, and scored by patches of rude cultivation, the outlines of which could still be traced by the careful eye, though the moorland grass and heather had overgrown the mouldering heaps and tiny fields. Here and there a higher mound rose above the rest; where once a chimney and hearth had been: but now it was covered with long grass or trimmed with lusty nettles. The destruction had been made as complete

as possible, so that no traces of it might remain to haunt the mind of the author. Here he had built his keeper's lodge, which was surrounded with a pleasant garden, which showed that the soil was by no means incapable of cultivation. That was all that was left to take the place of the hamlet, which had vanished like the morning mist from the mountain-side.

It is useless now to repeat that terrible story of ill-judged severity, which Dr. MacDevitt has told with studied moderation in his fine guide-book to the county of Donegal. It may be worth recording, that when Mr. Adair passed away, his widow caused to be carved on a conspicuous rock high above the glen, "To the memory of John George Adair, brave, just, and generous." One night a mighty storm rushed wildly over the region, the rock with its inscription was loosened and fell with a terrible crash to the bottom. The old man who told me the tale with a deeply-moving pathos, was firmly convinced that it was hurled down by the justice of heaven. As he spoke the words, a fierce look as nearly akin to a paroxysm of madness as I have seen on an ordinary human countenance, flamed over his face, though he had not been one of the unhappy tenants evicted. For myself I wondered how so many families could possibly have found a living in so wild and desolate a spot. But naturally I kept my wonderment to myself, for the memory of that tragedy, enacted thirty-five years before my arrival at its scene, was still fresh in the old man's mind. Mrs. Adair long survived her husband, and proved herself a consistent benefactress to her tenants, when she came to reside in her mansion.

The road tapered off into little better than a carttrack, though once it had been a favourite drive of the owner, and seemed to have been well-laid in the first instance. At the end was a grey gate leading to the main road between Church Hill and Doochary

Bridge. I paused to take a final glance down that wild valley: the lake shone brightly in the blazing sunlight; the castle, not inappropriately, looked like a tiny drab blot rising directly out of the water on its wood-bordered margin; the Loughsalt Mountain stood out clear-cut above the lesser heights. My heart was full of the tragedy which had just been told me in the very scene wherein it had been enacted, when I turned to look at the bare Glendoan valley, before I went on to Ballygeeha Gap. It was a comparatively shallow but extensive hollow, lying along both sides of the Bulaba River, which flows into Gartan Lough and out again under the name of the Lennan at Gartan Bridge. Its surface was wholly made up of brown bog and heathy moorland dotted here and there with little farms, with the hamlet of Glendoan lying almost out of the world, and the deserted granite quarry on the lonely high road. The rusty crane was still to be seen; the ruined office with its rusty padlock reminded me of the "thriving City of Eden," as Martin Chuzzlewit found it, while large square blocks of grey granite lay piled up on each side of the road.

It was a melancholy picture of ruined enterprise, which, had it been well managed, might greatly have benefited the peasantry of that poverty-stricken neighbourhood. It may have been the little public-house at Glendoan, which tempted the quarrymen to spend their unusual earnings thriftlessly, which caused the closing of the quarry. may have been true, as was told me, that a fault was found in the stratum, which rendered its working unprofitable. It may have been that the quarry itself was too far from the sea, and the carriage of the granite too expensive to allow it to pay its way. Whichever of these three causes may have led to its abandonment I cannot decide, though I think the last the most probable; but there it lies ruined like the silver mine on the other side of Errigal, with its hewn fragments around it to add to the desolation of that part of the Glendoan valley, where the little public-house is closed and the hamlet left in sobriety. There are many such memorials of abortive projects scattered over Ireland, which are as pathetic as they are tragic. I wondered then, and I wonder still, when the fine natural resources of the island will be put to a prosperous use for the benefit

of its struggling people.

Turning back towards Doochary Bridge I looked. carefully for the cart-track leading to a quarry used principally for providing material for the mending of the roads. I soon found it, as it passed by a roughly built stone office carefully locked, though I cannot imagine that there was anything to steal from it. Here I climbed to the top of the hill, which is really an outlying spur of Slieve Snacht. The next moment one of the most wonderful views that I have ever seen, in its own kind, broke with startling suddenness upon my sight. The stately slope of Errigal, with Aghla More just behind it, rose in front, its twin peaks blending into one. Below it stretched the two lakes of Dunlewey and Nacung, of a deep sapphire blue, with the hills leading up to Slieve Snacht beyond them. The white road to Gweedore wound between mountain and lough, looking thin as an autumn gossamer, the combination of line and colour had a sublimity and grandeur rarely matched throughout the county. I sat on a big boulder to let the scene soak into my very being. The light was so clear, that the great pyramid did not seem a mile away. The sun illumined its lower green slope, its grey screes and its shining peak: I could have imagined it an Alpine height, so snowy was its tranquil brow.

When I had had my fill of seeing, I looked out for the track—path it is not—to the Poisoned Glen which lay at least a thousand feet below. The track up to Ballygeeha Gap had been arduous enough to content an experienced mountaineer who scoffs at easy going, but worse was yet in store. The way, in plain fact, was neither more nor less than the bed of a fair-sized stream, which as it happened was not too sheer to have any positive danger in it. But for all that, it needed wary walking, the white rocks mingling with stray blocks of granite were treacherous and slippery, though there was little vegetation to add to its risks. Some of the boulders proved to be rocking-stones set on their pivot by the capricious hand of Nature, not by the inventive genius of the race of Druids. For myself I doubt if any of these so-called "logan-stones" owe their peculiar position to human agency, though I have no doubt that priests or medicine-men of any kind would use them to rivet their fetters upon

a superstitious race.

Be that as it may, there I was in the midst of a solitude broken only by the hoarse clamour of a cloud of rooks rising above Dunlewey woods, and the rarer twittering of an unseen wheatear. The air was so still that I could hear and count the beating of my heart. Step by step I clambered down, looking well to my feet, and understanding for the first time the full meaning of the words of the hymn, "One step enough for me." Yet ever and anon I paused to lift up my eyes to the magnificent prospect before me, for I had a strong conviction that I should never pass that way again. The lower I descended, the loftier grew the huge pyramid of Errigal, the more striking the white flanks of the glen rising straight from the bog below. The two lakes at the same time grew lovelier, though they began to lose the sapphire hue which distance had lent them: they were so still that the reflected hills seemed to slumber beneath their glassy surface. A boat filled with anglers appeared on the lower one; I wondered whether it contained the gentleman who had received so rude a shock when I told him that I was going to the Anglers' Inn. Peace be with him; so long as he is

alive, even if I myself be gathered to my fathers, the distinguished genus of snobs will not pass away.

By the time I was nearly half-way down, herbage began to be more frequent: in one spot I saw a flat rock covered by a fine clump of London Pride in full flower; not far below it lay a large patch of mossy saxifrage with its white flowers stuck all over it like large pins in a green velvet cushion. noticed a little hollow in the rocks dripping with a quick succession of big drops of water: here, to my unspeakable pleasure I found a fine crop of the Killarney fern. I had had no idea that it ever grew in Donegal until that happy day, when I saw it for the first time. I plucked just one translucent leaf, for it has this quality in common with the filmy fern; but to my sorrow I lost it on my downward path. Nor will I give any other indication of its habitat, for reasons too well known to the honest botanist. I have the serene satisfaction of believing that it will long continue to haunt that dripping hollow, unseen and unplundered by the few who climb up or down this steep and rugged track. Long may it flourish far from the selfish hands of those who call themselves fern-lovers, when in sober truth they are the destructive thieves of all rare plants and flowers.

I had sighted the marble church for some time, which looked very cold and white, as perhaps is fitting for the Protestant Church of Ireland: I do not think that I should be over-eager to worship in it, if it be true that it is only attended by three families. It is impossible, even with the gracious after-glow of memory, to describe the mingled glory and beauty of that majestic scene, nor will I make the vain attempt; but the sight of it repays a thousandfold the really hard labour of the descent and the subsequent inconveniences to be detailed in their place. From Ballygeeha Gap on the south, and the foot of Altan Lough of the north, the two finest views of the king of the Donegal mountains can be seen to best

advantage. It is difficult to decide which of the two is the finer; both are so wildly beautiful. But it may be affirmed with perfect truth, that from both of these view-points the pilgrim realizes perhaps for the first time the true majesty of the mountain. The pictures which they present cannot fail to fill his mind with memory-landscapes, sublime alike in

setting, line, and colour.

When after my long and toilsome descent I came to the bottom of the glen, I began to understand the force of the guide-book-maker's expressive adjective "detestable," though I did not entirely sympathize with its malignity. No doubt the surface is boggy; but the bog, though of the "soft order," can be crossed with reasonable care. It is true that he has written for easy-chair travellers, as well as for the most adventurous; hence he has been wise in giving a strong caution to the first, which will only whet the appetite of the second. The true pedestrian in Ireland does not set out on his travels in satin slippers, nor can he reasonably expect to find dry walking whereever he goes. Bogs quite as "detestable" as that in the Poisoned Glen, and far less picturesque, are to be found on most of our British moors and mountainhollows, which need just as much nimbleness and caution as the one in question. Furthermore, little forests of sweet gale covered the softest spots, which breathed forth a pleasant and refreshing perfume: many rare bog-plants were to be seen, for the most part out of reach, and there was the unfailing company of the stream. This in itself was of much assistance to me; in the dry weather of the last fortnight it provided me with long stretches of firmer pebbly beach, on which I was able to tramp much at my ease.

The sun shone fiercely down upon my bare poll, all the time that I was crossing that heaving surface: it seemed literally to bake the perpendicular white rocks towering above me into a heat matching their colour. But it had one advantage, it did to a certain

extent serve to make the "detestable" bog more passable; though it liquefied my spare frame to some purpose, it helped me considerably upon my way. Thus by turns I skipped from hummock to hummock, I tramped more steadily where it was possible, I paced down the bits of beach along the stream, and all but flung myself at full length into its hurrying waters. In one deeper pool I saw a trout large enough to have been the magic trout of many of the holy wells: could I have come near to him, I should certainly have tickled him and perhaps brought him home for my tea. But he was on the far side of the pool, so that I could only gaze at him with

disappointed eyes and watering lips.

In spite of all of the difficulties I was not long in reaching the high shelving rock, behind which Balor had sheltered himself before the dawn of history, and I stared in wonder at the deep furrows said to have been cleft by the poison of his evil eye. Then I gained a cart-track, and in a few moments more I passed between Dunlewey House and the marble church, reaching the high road within about quarter of a mile from the little publichouse. I turned to look at my track down to the glen: had I not passed down it I should not have believed that there was any way up what seemed a sheer face with a dark corner of broken rocks. Then I looked at the path leading to two farms, if that be not too exalted a term, which once stood at the head of Altan Lough. What their inhabitants cultivated I cannot say: bog and bog alone bordered that narrow way, though perhaps sheep may have formed the staple of their livelihood. Not a few of them were wandering about the brown expanse; though they were the smallest of their kind, they were covered with dense coats of trailing wool, so that they would do something to clothe the two households and help to pay the rent.

When I saw the haven of rest, once more I rejoiced

exceedingly: my palate was no longer too dainty for the "home-brewed beer," which I have described already, and I felt as if I could have drunk a hogshead, so parched to a cinder was my throat, so arid my inner man. I saw a car in the shed. and a horse feeding on the slope, so I guessed that I should find Mr. Gallaher there enjoying himself with his relatives. The hostess and her girls gave me the welcome of an old friend, though I had only seen them once before. There in the midst of them, very much at his ease, was mine host of the Anglers' Inn, who joined in their welcome and said he could take me home the rest of the way. It was about five; he said that he had just returned from Letterkenny, but I had reason afterwards to feel convinced that he had been there at least an hour before I joined the blithe party. He was giving the "garron" a much-needed rest, and indulging in a rapid and picturesque conversation in Gaelic. I have no doubt that he had been singing my praises with the delightful facility and felicity of a truehearted Irishman, who can do nothing by halves but commonly errs on the side of exaggeration. But he certainly contributed to the heartiness of my welcome.

Once more the unsavoury Indian meal bread was brought out with a kindness which almost robbed it of its repulsive flavour: this time it was accompanied by a sufficient lubricant of fresh butter, which smoothed its passage down the gullet. Mr. Gallaher drank "white whiskey" at my expense as if he had never tasted a drop before my arrival, while I consumed an adequate quantity of "home-brewed beer." Our hostess and both of the girls were lost in amazement when I told them that I had come round by Glenveagh, down Ballygeeha Gap, and through the Poisoned Glen. I am confident that they set me down in their own minds as a mad Englishman who preferred the conveyance of his two shanks to

that of the quicker-moving four legs of a horse in front of a side-car. Still, they themselves would have had no hesitation, had it been necessary, in taking their way to Mass every Sunday, though it cost them an eighteen miles' tramp. For my part I was very sure that I had had more enjoyment out of my long trudge than fifty side-cars would have given me, which could not have taken me just where I had been. Besides, fifty side-cars would only have been useful to me on the one occasion on which I could not have appreciated them, my funeral!

Time wore on: Mr. Gallaher, taking out his huge silver watch remarked that, "It was time to be off or the dinner would be spoiled and the misthress would be cross as two sticks." So we took our leave of his friends and relatives, and were soon on our way to Crolly Bridge. Along the way he told me amazing stories of the Professor's perfect prowess as an angler, of the prodigious catches which he usually brought home with him, and of many other accomplishments which need not be chronicled. They did not square with the Professor's own more modest account of his achievements, which he had given me with his own mouth. But I did not contradict my host; he might not have liked it, and he was nearly twice as big as I was. With every mile the weight and number of the fish increased, whereby I knew that Mr. Gallaher was himself an angler. By degrees I was staggered into admiration of the boundless imagination of the brethren of the "gentle craft," though I am a humble member of their fraternity. As I listened, I concluded, not without warrant, though there was no outward and visible sign of the fact, that my host was not so entirely innocent of the "white whiskey" as he had appeared to be when I gave him the stirrup-cup. Such draughts are of great assistance to the practice of the multiplication table:

moreover, I knew that he was enjoying himself as intensely as Mr. Micawber when reading his memorial in the Fleet Prison.

In the meantime I was enjoying myself to the full as intensely: I did not need to talk; I was only obliged to put in such interjections as "Really!" and the like, while my mind was free to meditate over what I had seen that day. The "garron" was going home, and though fatigued by its long journey, it needed no driving, so that my host had fair play for his imagination. His rapid narratives disturbed me no more than the vesper-hymn of the birds; they formed a sort of obligato to my thoughts, not unlike the pianoforte accompaniment to the modern reciter. My mind was filled with Errigal, so that there was no room for anything else. I was thinking of the two marvellous views of it which I had enjoyed, the one from near its base, the other from a considerable height. I was recalling the noble prospect in every direction from its tapering summit; I was gazing down into the blue depths of Altan Lough from the narrow ridge. Then, for the first time, I pictured to myself the horror of a fall from that sheer height, which had never entered into my mind when I was actually in danger of it.

I was rethinking the thoughts which had flooded my brain, when I had seemed to hang almost in air above the sunlit landscape. Then Glenveagh with the tragic story of the old Irishman rose in my soul: I could see his face with its terrible look of passionate indignation. I could see the hapless wretches, old and young, men, women, and children turned out of their homes on a winter's night, because "someone had blundered." It was a saddening thought, a sorrowful mental picture, which was too applicable to many parts of Ireland even at that very moment. In this way we trotted along, he driving and talking, I listening and thinking of something very different, while the

"garron" was dreaming of oats and a long rest. The next moment we crossed Bryan's Bridge at a rapid trot; Crolly Bridge was near at hand, and I took my last look at the great peak which suddenly vanished out of sight.

## ANCIENT TRADITIONS OF COUNTY DONEGAL

By the craggy hillside,
Through the mosses bare,
They have planted thorn-trees
For pleasure here and there.
If any man so daring
As dig them up in spite,
He shall find their sharpest thorns
In his bed at night.

-William Allingham.

THE oldest, but not too reliable traditions, tell that four races in turn found their way to Ireland, each of which succeeded in establishing itself, at least for a time, though except in one instance it never entirely conquered its predecessor. Of the Fomorians there are still faint legends in the Island of Tory, though they are said to have subdued the whole of Ireland. Elsewhere their memory has all but completely faded away since their defeat at the battle of North Moytura. Here it has been affirmed that they were all but destroyed by a band of mythical sea-rovers, known by the name of Nemedians, of whom hardly a trace remains, even in local folk-lore. Later arrived the Firbolgs, a short, strongly built, swarthy race, of which the lineal descendants may be seen in Connacht to-day. They were the users of flint and bone implements, who built the raths scattered so plentifully from one end of Ireland to the other. They were a primitive people, not improbably cannibals, wearing the skins of the animals which they killed for their food, never united into one kingdom, but under the command of petty chieftains, ceaselessly warring with one another, until they were compelled to join their forces to repel a common invader.

This invader proved to be a race of a much higher degree of civilization: golden-haired, using bronze implements, and particularly skilful in their ornamentation. This people was known as the Tuatha Dannans, or Dedannans, of whose name no sound explanation has yet been given. These were the makers of those wonderful gold ornaments, of which so many have been dug up in Ireland. They may have dwelt in the raths from which they had dispossessed their former owners, but they also constructed elaborate lake-dwellings, or "crannoges," which they reached in some cases by causeways specially built with a draw-bridge near the entrance. but more frequently by the large dug-out canoes, which they used in war and peace alike. Their skill in the goldsmith's art caused them to be looked upon as wizards by the people whom they had in part conquered. Hence, perhaps a curious fate has attended them; they have been transformed into the fairies, who at one time played a most important part in Irish life.

The Tuatha Dannans gave the colour of their hair to the fairies, who are usually represented as having long golden locks, which in the case of their women reached down to the ground. They in their turn were followed, and to a large extent reduced to submission by the Milesians, a still more advanced race, using iron, but less skilled in the goldsmithwork of their predecessors. Of these last invaders but little is known outside of the half-fabulous traditions of the national "Annals." They are supposed to have had high cheek bones and that deep violet eye so characteristic of the modern Irish. It was probably their use of iron, whereby they conquered their foes, which caused its employment

at a later period as a sure protection against the malice of the fairies, when the descendants of the vanquished race were only remembered and feared under this form. At all events I have seen a churn with a horse-shoe nailed under it, which was designed to keep the fairies from preventing the butter from coming. That use of the horse-shoe is thus older than the Christianized form of the legend, which makes the horse and ass occupants of the stable in Bethlehem.

It seems not unlikely that the annalists under these names attempted to explain the actual immigration of primitive men into Ireland. At all events they cannot have invented them, though they may have misapplied them. Being Christians they have done their utmost to give a Christian tone to the former paganism and its traditions, so that it is hard in their writings to trace any true features of the original pagan customs and beliefs. What is more, they have transferred bodily to their own saints some of the actions and dispositions of the heroes and kings of the pagan population. Such practices as appeared harmless to the missionaries they freely adopted, giving them a Christian significance. Amongst other things they found the belief in fairies as born of a dead race ineradicable in the minds of their converts. They therefore invented another origin for these quaint little beings. They represented them as remaining neutral in heaven, when Lucifer revolted against the Most High, who were therefore endowed with life on earth until the Judgment Day, when they would either be annihilated or cast into hell. But the two beliefs remained side by side until a comparatively late period, and traces of both may still be found in some of the western islands, which remain in a very primitive state.

In like manner the missionaries found the worship at holy wells too deeply engrained in the Irish

nature to be summarily put down. These were Christianized: the original water-spirits became saints of both sexes, though in some cases the original name survived, such as Tobereevul, or the Well of Aoibhill (pronounced "Evil"), one of the ancient Irish goddesses who became a banshee. Some of the ceremonial usages at the "patterns" of the Christian period, held around them on the days of the various saints to whom they had been rededicated, have come down from pagan times. For example, the votaries leave strips of rags from their clothing, locks of hair, glass beads, and simple household treasures, without which the expected cure will not be accomplished. Clearly these are traces of the older pagan offerings to the spirit of the waters, which had been turned into unimportant gifts. I have even seen the nail of a horse-shoe at St. Columba's Well in Glencolumbkille, by the holy water of which a horse may have been cured of some ailment. No doubt too, in this case, the fact that the nail was made of iron bore some relation to the offering.

I have chosen William Allingham's charming lines on the fairies as heading for this brief study, because it is my intention to begin with narratives of the "good people" and their mischievous pranks, as they were told to me some thirty years ago. From them I shall proceed to recall some of the traditions, which may have a shadow of a shade of history in them. The Rock of Doon, near Kilmacrenan, was once the favourite haunt of the "wee folk," in which there is a hole believed to lead to a vast underground place heaped up with gold, and of unapproached splendour. From this wild spot strains of the exquisite but pathetic fairy-music have been heard in the depth of the night by more than one belated wayfarer. In this place the older people were firmly convinced that Finvarra, the King of the Fairies, held his court with sumptuous revelry,

song, and dance. They who had once heard that fairy-music would have it for ever ringing in their memories, so that they would long to hear it once more. If they had their will and partook of fairy food and wine, they would remain for ever with the fairy-folk: if, on the other hand, they resisted the longing, they were in danger of going mad or slowly

fading out of life.

To this palace, by means of his emissaries, Finvarra conveyed beautiful mortal children and lovely girls, leaving changelings in the place of the first, and sorrow for the second. If children were born to the girls thus abducted, they were sometimes sent home, when their offspring became poets and musicians. More commonly when they grew old and ugly the Fairy King caused them to be taught many of the mysteries of fairy lore, the virtue of herbs, and the healing art: then he turned them out into ordinary life once more, to become the wise-women and fairy-doctors of the neighbourhood around their old homes. After their return they were wont to live by themselves far apart from the commonplace concerns of men and women, with whom they only had dealings to supply their physical wants, or to pursue their healing art. They might be seen rarely, gathering herbs at the changes of the moon, or when some planet was in the ascendant; but they could cast a withering look upon their observer, which made him slink off in terror.

Yet the faith in the knowledge and power of these withered crones, who may not have been old in years but certainly were in appearance, was boundless in certain parts of the county at the time of my first acquaintance with it. If they lived ten or twelve miles Irish from the spot where their services were needed, the friends of the afflicted person, or the owners of the sickly beast, would send for them in such haste as they could make. However hard the journey, nay, even in the darkness of the night, it

would be tramped willingly, though perhaps not very cheerfully until the object had been attained. They were summoned to heal mortal sicknesses at their last extremity, to relieve the bewitched, to neutralize the effects of the "evil eye," to bring back the real children in the place of the changelings, and to cure "elf-struck" cattle and horses. While they were on their way to fulfil their mission, they were usually able to convince the messenger that they knew all about the errand on which they were going. With great skill they drew from him the information which they needed, without giving him the slightest hint that they were, to put the matter bluntly,

pumping him.

What is more, they always seemed to achieve their purpose, or at least to content those who had sought their aid. Their acute knowledge of human nature gave them an irresistible advantage over the uneducated people amongst whom they practised their art. They at all times resolutely refused to take a fee for their exertions, holding that such knowledge as they possessed would leave them if it were sold. But when the cure was completed, they were quite willing to receive a considerable gift in recognition of their services. By this means some of them made quite a comfortable livelihood, and even passed for rich amongst the poverty-stricken population of that part of Ireland. They hardly ever suffered anyone to witness their secret rites, nor did they ever reveal the undoubted virtues of the medicinal herbs which they used, or the words of the spells which they muttered over their patients. Even these seldom heard the words, so quickly were they spoken, though in certain cases they were bound to secrecy under the threats of the awful penalty which would follow indiscreet speech.

While I was driving from Church Hill to Glenties by way of Doochary Bridge, I heard frightful screams issuing from the door of a cottage high

up the hillside near Lough Barra. I turned my head quickly in the direction from which they sounded, and saw a wizened, aged-looking, utterly miserable urchin tied to the back of a chair just outside the cabin. I have seldom seen a human creature so completely unlike any normal child: its skull could be seen through its shrivelled face, and its ribs through its breast which was uncovered. though the day was not particularly warm. It was like Gilbert's last picture of that famous precocious baby of his, who "died an enfeebled old dotard at five." The mother, a handsome dark woman, stood at the door of her house gazing fixedly at the wailing child with an expression of mingled terror and loathing quite unusual upon the face of an Irish mother. She seemed to have been beating the wretched little being, though she stopped as soon as she caught sight of the car. She might have been wishful to "overlook it," so fixed and so terrible was her gaze upon it.

At the same time, Michael, the driver, turned his eyes in the same direction, but he instantly removed them, as if he had seen a frightful dream. Then he crossed himself with a look not unlike that in the mother's face and murmured in a low awe-stricken tone, "That's a changeling, sir, and its poor mother. May the Lord save us all!" I could only just catch his words, but I was deeply interested at once and tried in vain to draw further information out of him. It was quite clear that he wished that he had not spoken so much, that he was afraid that he might have offended the "good people" as he called them by the mere mention of their spiteful tricks. He certainly believed that they could do him an irreparable injury if they chose, that they were hovering unseen around the car at that very moment. It may well have been, too, that he was in fear of my laughter: but the heart-rending shrieks of that miserable child and the awful look upon the

mother's face had quite banished any sense of amusement from my mind. If the belief was unreal to me, it was real enough to them, and tragical beyond expression to the child and to that deeply

to be pitied mother.

Up to this point Michael had been talkative enough, and proved himself a most entertaining companion to me: but now he grew suddenly silent, kept his eyes fixed upon his horse as if he were afraid that it was going to cast a shoe, and a look of fear sat upon his usually merry face. Now and then I saw his lips moving rapidly, and I knew that he was whispering the prayers of his church to himself. At the same time, when he thought himself unobserved, he crossed himself, and his lips moved more and more rapidly. I did not attempt to remove his fears or to interrupt his pious exercises: had I done so I might have made an enemy for life, so deeply rooted was this superstition of his, so terrible did it seem to me. When the horse happened to stumble against a stone, he ejaculated fervently, "May the Houly Virgin protect us all and give us a good journey!" invocation seemed to have its effect, for the horse stumbled no more, though the road was out of repair and its surface covered with large pebbles.

We drove farther down the noble Gweebarra valley, but I could think of nothing else but that unhappy child, which was still shrieking with amazing power of lungs. In a moment or two we met a dark-looking woman just past middle life, wearing a faded black gown, and a black shawl of nearly the same rusty hue over her head. As she passed us I caught sight of her eyes, which were very dark and shone with that fiery brightness which is often seen in those of mesmerists and the like. She looked neither to the right nor to the left, but kept her gaze fixed straight in front of her, as if she were minded to pierce right through the



LOUGH BARRA



Glendoan Mountains which towered in front of her. She seemed to glide rather than walk over the steep road, which she traversed at a swift pace without raising any dust. She did not so much as cast a single glance at our car and its occupants, at which Michael appeared to take great comfort, for he heaved a deep sigh of unspeakable relief the moment

that she had passed us.

I followed her with my eyes, as she moved away from us, until I saw her untie the unhappy little urchin and carry it into the house. Leaving the anxious mother outside, she shut the door carefully, and I saw her no more from that day to this. The first moment that he cast eyes upon her Michael seemed to tremble all over: crossing himself once more and muttering a brief prayer, he whipped our pony till he set it off into something between a canter and a gallop, which was highly discomposing to myself, though he kept his seat with perfect ease. When I uttered a mild protest, he leaned across to me and whispered hoarsely, quite close to my ear, "Sure, sir, that's the fairy docthor: she's going to the house beyant. May the Blessed Virgin keep us from harm!" Not another word could I drag out of him until we came to a stop at the door of the leading inn of Doochary Bridge. He was quite as much afraid of that wild-looking woman as of the fairies themselves. He firmly believed that she had the "evil eye" and could overlook us at her pleasure, thus doing us a grave mischief, which might last us the length of our lives.

What became of that miserable little child, I know not: it may have been held over the fire to test whether indeed it was a fairy changeling, for fairies cannot endure the fire. It may have been subjected to some of those fearful pagan rites practised in such cases. It may have died of some wasting disease beyond the power of the wise woman herself to cure by her spells and her herbs. I

should have liked to know more about her: but it was obviously impossible to question Michael about her; it was plain to my mind that he would not venture to give me any details of her past history. I was sure that it must have been a tragedy, not improbably of a sordid and commonplace kind, but a tragedy none the less. The Irish are more emotional than their more stolid neighbours; the marks of any severe trial through which they may have passed are often indelibly branded upon their face, and give them the appearance of premature age. The expression on that woman's pinched features was unforgettable; whatever she had suffered

had cut her to the quick.

When my host of the inn came into the room to see that my lunch was getting ready, I began to question him with great caution about the antecedents of the wise-woman. Much to my relief I found that good Catholic as he was, he had no belief in fairies, though he had many other superstitions of his own. From him I learned that this woman was commonly believed by the folk of that and the neighbouring valleys to have been stolen away in her youth and beauty by the "good people." She had disappeared suddenly from her old home, from which she had been away at least a score of years, when she suddenly returned to be a "fairy-doctor" of no small local celebrity. "It's my own self that remembers her a fine colleen entirely, sir," he said at the close of his story. "Many's the boy now living that broke his heart thrying to win her. But it's my belief, sir, that she went off wid a painter-fellow, that lodged in my house, and came back when he'd wearied of her. By gob, that's the sort of fairy-prince that stole her away, that and never a one beside!"

He may have been right, or he may have been wrong: but I have never seen a more weird-looking woman of her years in Ireland; nor have I any doubt

that she would succeed in passing for a fairy-doctor with the best of her kind, of whom there were, at that time, not a few, both male and female, in County Donegal. I longed to go back and see for myself what had happened in that lonely cottage: but when I hinted my wish to my host he strongly dissuaded me from doing anything of the kind. He impressed upon me the sure consequence that it would be taken very ill by the mother herself, if not by all the rest of the inhabitants of the valley. He went so far as to add with an air of supreme confidence, that if I pursued my purpose Michael would refuse to drive me to Glenties, and that I should be unlikely to get another driver to speed me on my way. boys," he asseverated, shaking his head with an air of mingled pity and contempt, "would believe anything. If they'd been over the sea, like myself, they'd have learned a thing or two that'd be more useful to them, and made them a thrifle wiser at the same time!"

Reluctantly I followed his advice: I tried to consume my ham and eggs and potatoes boiled in their jackets; but I could not drive that screeching child out of my mind, so that I made a poor show as a trencherman, though I did my utmost not to disappoint my host in this respect. Meanwhile. Michael in the kitchen actually ate next to nothing, though a good meal was set before him. His fears, however, did not prevent him from drinking, as I discovered later on, when he displayed both more courage and a slight hesitancy in his speech. But in the one matter which interested me most deeply. he persisted in remaining as silent as the grave, nor would he give me so much as a single word of information. Whenever I even hinted a distant approach to the forbidden subject, he shied like a salmon which feels the first prick of the hook. Nothing, not even the promise of a sufficient reward would induce him to jeopardize his safety by giving

me his own opinion of the "good people." To him

they were taboo, and taboo they remained.

A few days before I had had my first taste of a belief in fairies, when I was crossing over the bog towards the Rock of Doon. All around me lay desolation, enlivened here and there by little potato patches and meagre meadows parted in some places by a streaming bohareen or narrow lane quite as treacherous as the bog itself. A few haggard thornbushes of great age were almost the only trees which I had seen since I had left Gartan in the early morning. By a little stream which served as a drain, grew a haggard dock or two with a few more common water-plants, which served to emphasize the loneliness of the scene. Close to me I saw a half-witted man searching under every bush and minutely examining every broader dock-leaf in his path. He appeared to have lost something of great value, which it was almost a matter of life and death for him to find. When I offered to help him, he took the matter ill and began to utter a rapid sentence in Gaelic, which had an appalling sound and I had small difficulty in recognizing as a curse.

A neighbouring farmer of an unusually substantial appearance for that part of the country, who was weeding his potato-patch, happened to overhear him, for he had by no means spoken in a whisper. After rebuking the utterer he translated the sentence to me, which was to this effect, " May the blighting breath of the bog blast all the remainder of your days!" Hugely delighted with so magnificent an imprecation, I took a shilling from my pocket and gave it to the half-witted man. Instantly his evil look turned into a gay smile: he spat upon the coin, put it in his one pocket which had no hole in it, and poured forth a liberal blessing in English, of which I could only make out the two words "Young ginger." He was alluding to the colour of my hair and my sun-baked complexion with unmistakable plainness. Such a blessing, whatever might be its content, was certainly worth a shilling. Indeed, upon the whole it may be truly said to have been fulfilled in all save one respect: he promised me a wife of surpassing beauty, who has not yet fallen to my lonely lot. Then he resumed his search with equal diligence, though he found nothing that day.

I thanked him and turned to talk to the farmer, who proved to be a man of much intelligence and

little credulity.

"What's he looking for?" I asked without betraying the intense curiosity which filled my mind. "Sure and he's looking for a leprechaun," was

the answer, which conveyed no information to me.

"What's a leprechaun?" I went on, making a woeful hash in the pronunciation of that hitherto unknown word, but resolved to gain as much

enlightment as he chose to give me.

"Doesn't your honour know that?" he exclaimed with an air of great surprise. "And isn't he the good people's brogue-mender? And doesn't he sit under a big dock-leaf wid his green coat and red hat, hammering away like Condy Doolan, the ould cobbler at Kilmacrenan?"

"What will he do with him, when he gets him?" I asked with a half-suppressed smile lurking

around the corners of my mouth.

"Is it afther mocking the poor gossoon ye are, sir?" he said with just a shade of reproach in the

tone of his voice, "and him not all there?"

Just a little ashamed I answered promptly, "Not a bit of it; didn't you see me give him a trifle? I was only thinking that the brogue-mender would have all he could do to mend the poor boy's boots, and they need it."

"And that's thrue, sir," he answered with a kindly smile over his cheerful face. "The poor boy has dreamed a dream three times that his fortune was made if he could catch and hould a leprechaun. Sure he thinks that he can put him in his pocket and keep him until he tells where the pot of goold lies hidden. When he's got that he'll be able to live aisy all his days at afther. I don't believe in thim things myself, sir; the good priest has taught me better. Hard wurruk's the only leprechaun that I know at all, at all."

Well pleased with his wise answer I thanked him warmly, gave him a fill of tobacco, a good pull at my flask, and what he valued far more, a hearty shake of Thus we parted good friends; but whenever I looked back, I could see the poor half-wit still searching, still finding his way more than once into unsuspected bog-holes. He was not alone in his hunt for a leprechaun: many others better furnished with brains than he would often engage in that profitless search. When a prehistoric urn is dug up from some mouldering sepulchre and found to be filled with bones, the uninstructed finders are firmly convinced that it originally contained gold, which the fairies had maliciously changed into bits of bone or stones. Hence they smash up the urn in a rage because of their disappointment, and with a vague belief that in this way they are injuring the "good people." It may be added, that such searchers are commonly subject to "a bone in their back," which always aches at the mere mention of work, so that they seldom fail to get not what they seek, but what they certainly deserve.

When I was staying at Dunglow, it happened to be the first of May, when fairies and other mischievous beings are credited with especial power, which they always use to the prejudice of mortals. It chanced to be a fine moonlight night: the ashen clouds here and there lighted up into a silvery splendour sailed swiftly over the deep blue dome, the Atlantic waves were lined with curves of living lustre, and a gentle breeze was breathing softly over the

heaving waters. I was strongly tempted to take an evening walk by the edge of the beach, where the tide was moving quietly on its outward way. I was just at the door on the point of setting out when one of the girls of the inn touched me lightly and besought me not to leave the house that night if I hoped to come back alive. I felt a little impatient; I did not see how I could *come* back dead, unless the waves or something else carried me, so I asked her, "Why not, Hannah?"

"Sure, sir, ye might see the boat of the dead, and it's little we should see of ye, if ye did!" was the

astonishing answer.

I looked into her face, and saw that her usually rosy cheeks were quite white, and her violet eyes

shone with a look of extreme terror.

When I perceived her plight, I did not care to question her further, or do violence to her fears by walking along the shore. I turned into the commercial room, where the only occupant was a northern Irish traveller, who had a great contempt for the intellect of any other than the Belfast Orangeman. Looking him full into the face I asked this pure fountain of Ulster wisdom what the girl He lifted up his eye-brows in indignant scorn, and informed me that on May and November evenings the fishermen would seldom put out to sea for fear lest they should meet with the "boat of the dead." As far as I could gather from his fluent but rather incoherent talk, for he had had several whiskeys already and would have several more before he retired for the night, on either of these particular evenings the dead who have been drowned either during the year or for several years, put out to sea in phantom-boats. Those who look on them will either die that night or within the year. Those who enter one of their boats will never return, though their bodies may be found washed up by the surf.

More than one of the fishermen had seen the boat,

he went on, according to their own tale, and had just escaped with their lives. Words cannot picture the wrath and contempt in his face as he poured forth a stream of denunciation against the folly of the "Papishes," as he called them, who believed such trash as that. Next he proceeded to eulogize at considerable length his own Protestant good sense, for the Belfast Orangeman is nothing if not modest! He spiced his remarks with a big handful of blasphemy, for even the righteous Protestant can swear with a fiery vigour that might well melt the ice around the North Pole. I left him to his whiskey after thanking him for his information and admiring the vigour of his language and his prejudice. I have sometimes wondered what became of him: he must have passed from earth long since, and I can only imagine him as taking charge of the "cursing

stones" of Inishmurray.

To spare Hannah's anxiety on my behalf I did not go out that night, though it would have been a novel experience to me of absorbing interest to get a glimpse, however brief, of the "boat of the dead." Many of the people believe that the dead have been taken to fairyland, from which they are allowed to return for a short time on particular nights of the year. They do not confine themselves to the water; sometimes they may be seen dancing on a green hillside by a passer-by who is attracted towards them by the marvellous sweetness of their music. If he once venture to join in their dance, he will never come back to his home. This I learned from an elderly man, who believed that he had actually seen "the dance of the dead," and that he would have been dead from that moment had not one of the dancers warned him in good time. He was just on the point of dancing with the girl whom he had loved and lost when he heard a voice close to his ear whisper, "Go back at once, if you want to live. If you dance with her, they will find your body, but you will never

leave us." Without once looking behind him he flew home at full speed, crossing himself and muttering brief prayers by turns. Since that time he had never gone out on the evening either of the first day

of May, or the first day of November.

Before leaving fairies and wise-women, I must call attention to another kind of being, who is met with in the folk-lore of many parts of Ireland, and is not absent from that of Donegal. The sea has its maidens as well as the land: the Irish call them "merrows," the English "mermaids," words which are virtually a translation the one of the other. The same elderly man told me of a young fisherman who had caught one such asleep, and stealing some part of her raiment had awaked her and induced her to become his wife. They had lived very happily together, until she had found the missing piece of clothing, and taking it in her hand had vanished to join her relatives in the sea. Her husband never married again, but some of her children were ancestors of several of the good families of the neighbourhood. He gave me their names, but they need not be set down here: their descendants might not like it, and the royal princess of the sea would be the last to wish to have her weakness for an ordinary fisherman proclaimed broadcast. My informant clearly believed that he was telling the simple truth, though he himself had never seen a "merrow," though in his young days he had often looked for one on the cliffs of Crohy Head and the beach of Aranmore.

It is no long step to take from fairies to witches, of whom I have seen several, though none of them deigned to give me any evidence of her supernatural powers. I found them as harmless as they were ugly, though their neighbours dreaded to cast eyes upon them. They were believed to take the shape of hares, which at that time were not eaten by the peasantry of the western coast; at least of Donegal.

Many of them were credited with the unhallowed possession of the "evil eye." So firmly rooted was this superstition, that it was always wise on entering a cabin and looking at a fine baby to spit on the floor and say aloud, "God bless the wean." The wisewoman was supposed to be able to overthrow their spells: it was an encounter of wits between them, in which the mightier was certain to prevail. On 1st May garlands of the "marybud" or "marsh marigold" sometimes twined with "Our Lady's fern" can still be seen attached to crosses made of two willow-wands hung over the door and window of many a cabin in the remoter districts. These are regarded as a sure preventative against the spite of

the fairies, or the spells of the witches.

A description of one of these uncanny women will suffice. The exact site of her dwelling I will not divulge, though it may be that she has gone from the land where she was dreaded, so that her precise whereabouts may well be uncertain. Though she was old and kippered—I can call it nothing else—when I saw her, she looked as if she would live for ever. She had been tall when she was young, if indeed she ever had been young, but by that time she was bent like a bishop's crosier. Her skinny face was unwashed, and had been in that economical state for many years: but it was seamed with a hundred wrinkles, which were only made more conspicuous by little ridges of ancient dirt. She had kept many of her teeth, which were black with age and tobacco; over her thin lips her sharp nose hung like the beak of a bird of prey. Her hair had been dark, but was lined with dingy grey; her eyes, even at her age, were bright and piercing, and a truly evil light seemed to shine over her dirty face. Her bare feet looked as if they had been black-leaded, so encrusted were they, so polished by continual use. She may have been harmless enough, but she looked just what her neighbours around her thought her to be.

She wore a woollen mob-cap as dirty as her face, which seemed to have come into existence on her first birthday and to have occupied its present position ever since. Over it she threw a shawl of an ancient and faded quality, which completely disguised its original colour. Her gown was coeval with her shawl, and fringed at the lower end by the envious hand of time. Her cabin was a tiny one-roomed building, giving her just room to move about in it between the bed and the opposite wall; it was not blessed with a chimney of any sort, not even a hole in the thatch, so that the peat-smoke puffed out at the door, where she sat in fine weather sucking complacently at her cutty-pipe. She had no one to tend her: few had the courage to pass her door, unless they were armed with specific charms hidden upon their person. Her only constant companions were a black cat with a white chest, a black goat with a white beard, and a black cow with a tuft of white hair at the end of its tail. A scanty pasture-ground lay around her cabin, which was just big enough to feed the goat and the cow.

How she managed to tend her animals, no one knew: but she did make a living somehow without begging, or willingly accepting gifts offered to her for fear of possible mischief at her hands. What is still more surprising, she never failed to pay her rent at the time when it fell due, a punctuality seldom practised on that estate. Consequently, both the landlord and agent thought well of her, and laughed at the stories of her supernatural powers. always took care that she had a sufficient supply of turf cut for her, and piled in a neat stack behind her house. She was a wonderful hand at milking a cow. so that she was never short of a good supply of milk. Her animals came the moment that she called them. though many were convinced that the cat, in spite of its white chest, was her familiar spirit, while some went even so far as to cast doubts upon the goat,

She never admitted anyone but the landlord and agent inside her door: any who came to consult her were obliged to receive her advice outside the cabin. It was just such a luckless old woman of this type that the people in Tipperary, with wanton cruelty, burned to death about two years after I had seen the

"ould witch of -- in County Donegal."

The witches of an older time were cast in a more heroic mould, though they were seldom fortunate in their endeavours. They were of gigantic stature, endowed with enormous physical strength, and with such activity that they could run like the wind and leap over broad chasms without endangering themselves. By their spells they could destroy the small armies of the period, though they seldom were able to gain the victory for those who consulted them. For a time they appeared to prevail, when some untoward circumstance occurred which destroyed the virtue of their enchantments along with their own lives. Aghla More, near Fintown, overhangs the narrow and wild-looking Lough Fin, of which there is a singular tradition, which I heard when I was talking to the oldest man in Narin, a village lying on Dunmore Head, about fourteen English miles away. The light railway runs now high above the dark lough, in one part of its course crossing a bridge, the foundations of which had to be laid four times, as the engineer told me, so soft and treacherous was the bog on either side of the stream, which it was destined to span.

Amongst the mountains behind Aghla More, dwelt a monstrous giant named Feargowan, whose housekeeper was his sister, Fin, a mighty enchantress in those parts: but her spells could not give her knowledge or save her life. A few miles from their dwelling appeared a mighty boar, huge as that of Calydon, which devastated the fields far and wide. The bravest and most skilful hunters for miles round had tried in vain to destroy the savage monster, which

had always made a speedy end of all who ventured to attack it. Confident of his strength, Feargowan set out alone to kill the boar. Arrived at its lair he awoke it with loud cries: the mighty beast rushed upon him with fiery eyes and foaming tusks. Then arose a furious battle, in which Feargowan did indeed kill the boar, but was so terribly wounded that he shouted aloud in his agony, from the spot where he lay bleeding to death on the hillside to the north of

Aghla More.

Fin, his sister, heard the agonized cries of her brother, and rushed down to the margin of the lake: but her magic powers did not prevent her from being deluded by the echoes of the mountain, whereby her brother's shouts seemed to come now from this, now from that side of its gloomy waters. Misled by the clamour, she at once crossed the lake, when the shouts seemed to come from the margin which she had just left behind her. Back she went again, but found no traces of her brother, who had not ceased to implore her to come to him. Once more she seemed to hear his cries from the farther side; back she went again. but with no better success. Thus she was kept crossing over the lake backwards and forwards by the delusion of the echoes, until her strength failed her and she sank into its darkling depths. Ever from that time the lonely lake has been known as Lough Fin. Meanwhile, Feargowan's strength ebbed away, his shouts grew fainter and fainter, his last breath left him, and he lay dead side by side with the monstrous boar, which he had slain at the cost of his own life.

It may be noted that in the lower hills behind Aghla More, is a mountain-tarn, which is seldom visited by any but the wandering sheep. Here dwelt that lake-horse common to Irish legend, which does not seem to have borne the sheep any ill-will, but reserved its powers for any mortal who might come to disturb its solitude. I have not seen that lonely

tarn, but I have met a man who solemnly assured me that he had seen the monster issuing from the little lake, but that he had not stayed to "take two looks at it." Nor would he direct me the shortest way to the place, that I also might catch a sight of it. That he had seen something I do not doubt, what he did see I cannot conjecture; what had helped him to see it I can divine, but I would not reveal for worlds. Suffice it to say that he was a pillar of the little inn at Narin, where he told the tale of his vision to an admiring circle with a power which seemed to stiffen their hair and involuntarily lift up their hats.

Beyond Narin, on Dunmore Head, there is quite a cluster of prehistoric forts, which are in most cases little more than mounds of shapeless ruins. are also several small lakes, in two of which—Lough Doon and Lough Birroge—are islets in each case almost covered with a "bawan," or stone "cashel" which was once the dwelling of some petty chief. Both may have been meant to serve as safe harbouring for cattle, as the larger one is connected with the story of a witch and her cow. It is one of those stories like that related of Inish Bofin in Connemara, where the witch was wont to drive her cow to pasture, and on its return to turn it into a stone for the night. On being struck by a fisherman, he and she were both turned into stones. Occasionally the cow is heard lowing beneath the waters, and has been known to come out and walk round the islet, lowing pitifully for her mistress, who exists no longer. The bawan on Lough Doon is the larger of the two, and in a fine state of preservation; that on Lough Birroge is much smaller and has been in ruins for a considerable time.

A bright and cheerful old inhabitant of Narin told me the story of the two bawans with a liveliness and gusto which I cannot reproduce. Two sister-witches each owned one of these lakes respectively: one long summer evening they were busily engaged each in building her house. Suddenly, the sister who was building at Lough Birroge heard a piercing shriek from the neighbouring lake, just as she was lifting a huge stone to set it in its place. "My sister is dead!" she screamed in agony and let the stone fall into the water. The same moment she determined not to survive her sister and sank beneath the quiet ripples of the sheltered lake. "And isn't the shtone she dhropped standing out of the wather to be seen this day. Ye will have seen it yourself, sir, if ye have ever seen the lough!" said my informant, who evidently believed the truth of his tale. I do not deny that such a stone does exist, that I have seen it; but I did not insult him by expressing the opinion that it was part of a ruined causeway made by the original builders, which, after the fashion of crannoges, would have a gap in it somewhere near the entrance to the fort.

Fascinating as this theme of witches and the like is, I must leave it to chronicle traditions of a more historic type, though largely blended with legend, if not in some cases of myth. It seems natural to begin with one or two stories of Tory Island, which still remains in a most primitive state, though the fishermen seem to be a finely built race of men. This barren land at the time of which I am speaking, was owned by a Manchester gentleman, who hardly, if ever, set foot in it. His property did him little good, indeed as far as can be learned he never once received any rent for it, though it must be confessed that the land is not worth the payment of any rent. In the old manuscripts it is described as of a rich and fruitful soil; if that were ever true, it must be admitted that the soil has degenerated either from want of proper cultivation, or because of the sweeping across it of the strong winds from the Atlantic Ocean. Not a tree was to be seen upon it thirty years

ago, the grass was thin, the oats miserable and

starved-looking.

There were no roads in it until the lighthouse was built, an eminently necessary protection against its formidable cliffs. The island is closely connected with the life of St. Columba; his round tower, but for a portion of the cap, is entire; it is the shortest and one of the rudest of its kind. It is not likely that he caused it to be built; but it does not date very far from the foundation of his church during his missionary life in his native county. Of the church itself, or of the later building which followed it, a few crumbling ruins mark the site, while his tau-shaped cross stands where he himself may have set it. The islanders are a hardy race of fishermen, who pay neither rent, rates, nor taxes; any who presumed to collect such dues would be summarily pebbled off the island with fairly large stones. They are governed by a king, who, next to the priest, exercises all but absolute authority over them. Thirty years ago the king was a dwarf, repulsive-looking but possessed of great intelligence, who ruled over his race with a firm and wise control.

The Sligo steamer on its bi-weekly voyages, when the sea is sufficiently calm, stands at anchor near the coast and the islanders come off in their boats to receive their goods. Most of these are fine stout fishing-boats, which will carry a fair burden, and are able to face a comparatively rough sea. It is a most interesting sight to see the stores unshipped, and to hear the guttural Gaelic of the islanders, which in many cases, is still their only language. During the winter months the steamer is unable to halt at Tory: one of the captains told me that as late as May, he had been unable to land any goods for six successive weeks. What the islanders can do without these necessary stores, it is not easy to imagine. When the sea is rough, they have not their largest resource, they cannot fish, and the barren soil does not produce anything like enough for their simple needs. It seems certain that many a long dark winter's night they will perforce go supperless and in the darkness to bed.

In Tory there is a certain "Holy Stone" undoubtedly pagan in its origin, though probably blessed by St. Columba or one of his successors. For many centuries, when any invader was to be seen, the stone was pointed in the direction of his approaching fleet: instantly a great storm would break over him and he and his force were sure to be lost in the ocean. In the September of 1884 the landlord thought that it was time to collect his rents and arrears: he obtained from the government the gun-boat Wasp to aid him in that difficult and usually dangerous process. The keeper of the "Holy Stone" saw the Wasp approaching: he disliked her appearance and set the stone in the direction of her course. A violent storm at sea arose, the gun-boat was wrecked and all hands lost but six. This disaster happened on the 22nd of September, 1884: the body of the luckless commander, after drifting for many days, came ashore in the stormy bay of Glencolumbkille, and lies buried in the Protestant graveyard. It is needless to add that the belief of the islanders in the virtue of the "Holy Stone " was established by that tragedy upon a foundation which cannot be shaken.

Tory has one of the most beautiful of all the Irish legends connected with it, which I shall set down as I heard it, though not in the wonderful Doric of the teller who translated it to me from the Gaelic, nor with the fine literary power of Dr. MacDevitt. One morning, it is not known how long ago, some fishermen were making their way to the sea to ply their wonted task, when they saw the body of a nun which had drifted upon a green bank just above high-water-mark. The corpse was of an unearthly beauty, the hands were folded upon the breast, and

the lips had a smile upon them as though at the pleasant dreams of quiet sleep. Awed by the unwonted sight the simple fishermen knelt down by the body, gazing with wonder upon its tranquil loveliness. They knew not what to do, till one wiser than the rest advised them to go to the priest, who would know better than they how to treat the

strange visitant.

The good father came at once to the spot with those who had summoned him. When he saw the fair form he uttered the prayers of the Church with deep reverence. Then he bade those who had found it bury it on the greensward upon which it was lying. The whole population gathered to the funeral, and from that date the "Nun's Grave" was held as sacred as the relics of St. Columba himself. So holy was the green mound in the thought of the fishermen, that few of them henceforth would put out to sea without first praying at its side and taking a handful of the hallowed earth into his frail boat. At last the demand for this protective soil grew so great that those who sought it would soon have laid bare the blessed corpse itself. For this reason the priest forbade any of the fisher-folk to take more than a small pinch of it, which he rightly considered would be to the full as helpful to them as a whole handful. The custom still continues: those who observe it very confidently affirm that they have never suffered from any storm, and their nets have always been filled with fish. The story is beautiful and touching: it illustrates more than many words the whole-hearted faith of these simple fisherfolk, which certainly helps them and can injure

But their simplicity is not untouched by a certain native shrewdness which rarely deserts the true Irishman, and serves him well in his business transactions. There is no official of any kind, nor any doctor in Tory: in most cases of sickness the relatives of the patient have recourse to the wise-woman, or to the charms and remedies dating from a remote antiquity. Sometimes, however, the disease is too potent for these old-world specifics, and it is necessary to send for the nearest doctor. Such a case happened within the last fifty years: the nearest doctor then lived at Falcarragh, and for long afterwards. He professed to be the hero of the story; but as that rank has been claimed by other doctors, I will not presume to assort their differences. The adage is old but true, "Where doctors disagree, who then shall decide?" But the virtual truth of the story is perhaps guaranteed by the number of claimants for the victim's wreath. As far as I am concerned I am willing to leave it with my informant,

though I cannot tell his story as he told it.

Early one morning he was startled by the advent of five or six fishermen from Tory, who earnestly prayed him to come and prescribe for a patient who seemed on the point of death. Realizing the roughness of the passage and the doubt of receiving any recompense for his service, he put them off as well as he could. When all else failed, he imagined that the mention of his fee would damp their enthusiasm: he explained that he could not go unless they first paid him his fee of a guinea. The deputation retired a little to consult with one another, and he thought that he had got rid of them: much to his surprise, in less than five minutes they returned, and laying the money in his hand, they bade him to come with them. He had now no longer any reasonable ground for refusal, so pocketing his fee and his disinclination, he boarded their boat and in due time they arrived at the landing-place. They took him to the cabin where the sick man was lying in a parlous condition: he prescribed for his patient, sat up the night with him, and left him in a fair way of recovery.

After breakfast he wanted a boat to take him back

to his more comfortable quarters on the mainland. But there was not a boat to be found anywhere: all the fishermen with one consent had gone out fishing, leaving only their wives, children, and the old folks to keep house. They would not be back for many hours, perhaps not until the following day, so the unfortunate doctor was an unwilling prisoner. Chafing inly and swearing outwardly at his restraint he prepared to wait for their return, when he felt certain of being conveyed in less than two hours to the mainland. Next morning broke, and with it the weather: still not a boat was to be had, nor would a single fisherman put out to sea, excusing himself by the threatening aspect of the sky and sea. The sad state of his other patients haunted the doctor's mind and put him into a passion, though it is just possible that they would be all the better for a brief

holiday from his drastic medicines.

He button-holed everyone whom he met, he begged and prayed, he swore and threatened: but neither entreaties availed him, and his threats were derided. He could not go to the priest, who happened just then to be on the mainland spending a holiday with some friends. There that unlucky son of Æsculapius was a prisoner: there he was likely to remain, unless he could come to some reasonable terms with his gaolers. At last he meekly got off his high horse, and condescended to ask them what they would take to convey him home. He received one answer, "Tree guineas, doctor, or you will stay here till the luan (Judgment Day)." When he heard the amount he stormed furiously: but he might as well have kept calm, the boatmen refused to stir a boat or unship an oar until their fee was put into their hands. Though "hoist with his own petard " the doctor saw the humour of the situation, which cost him a good round sum. He ruefully rubbed his pocket where it smarted, and ended his story with the words, "I paid it, sir, I paid it and be damned to them: but it was a clever trick after all!"

Leaving Tory I must say something about the Rock of Doon and its far-famed Holy Well. I have already alluded to the Rock itself more than once, which has sacred associations of its own no less than the Well lying beneath its shadow. As I have said, the light railway was entirely in nubibus when first I saw it, so that its lonely grandeur, standing as it did in the midst of a wide bog, impressed me with an almost insufferable sense of solitude. It was like a colossal boulder, or rather two boulders joined together into a long ridge, rising to a considerable height and quite isolated in position. No other rock in any way approaching to its size lay near, so that it could be seen for a long distance by all who drew near to it from every side. It rose above a dense fringe of low bushes, in which many birds built their nests, and dominated the surrounding country with its deeply scarred face of dull, grey-looking stone.

Beneath it, on 5th July, 1608, fell Sir Cahir O'Dogherty, the chieftain of Innishowen, after a brief but brilliant struggle for the liberation of his country. Brave, high-spirited and handsome he was the darling of his people and the terror of his foes, who did not shrink from libelling him with vile calumnies. To Sir Arthur Chichester, James I.'s Lord Deputy, he was a "bloody traitor and rebel "; in the eyes of his countrymen he was the gallant champion of their freedom, whose name lived long amongst their mountains and glens. The treachery of a traitor in the Irish camp hastened his defeat and death. It is singular, that not a single one of the chieftains who almost succeeded in winning the independence of their country, escaped from the treachery of one of their trusted leaders. Their story is told with fine restraint and conspicuous fairness in Joyce's fine "Short History of

the Irish People," which does much to explain the continual failure of capable men to set their country free.

At Kilmacrenan Abbey, not far away, was kept for centuries a large flat stone with the prints of a pair of feet upon it, either produced by the hand of man or by a freak of Nature. On this stone the O'Donnell chieftain was inaugurated by a successor of St. Columba; the marks upon it were believed to represent the measurement of the feet of the first of his predecessors. When needed, it was brought out in state from the abbey and laid upon the top of the Rock of Doon: the abbot in all his canonicals. with a suitable retinue of his order was there, holding in his hand a carefully peeled and smoothed white wand. The chieftain himself placed his feet in the prints on the inaugural stone: the abbot, after saying certain prayers especially made for the ceremony, handed him the white rod. The O'Donnell received it reverently: he pledged himself to abide by the laws and customs of his forefathers, to see to it that his administration of justice should be as straight and pure as the white rod which he held in his hand.

His principal clansmen surrounded him on the rock, arrayed in their most costly apparel, while the rest, in a great throng, stood bare-headed at its base, breaking in ever and anon upon the ceremony with loud and joyful cries. As far as I could learn, the Holy Well played no part in this old-worn ritual which was observed so late as the days of the first two Stewarts. When the proceedings ceased the stone was carefully replaced in the abbey, to be closely guarded until it was needed once more. Then a great banquet followed, ending with music and dancing. The stone has disappeared for many years; nor is it known certainly what has become of it. Some assert that it came into the possession of a convert to Protestantism, who, in his new-born,

image-breaking zeal, smashed it to pieces. Others no less positively affirm that it is still in existence, carefully preserved by a certain family, the members of which jealously keep the secret of its whereabouts. That it ought to be in the fine museum of the Irish Academy, if indeed it is still preserved, no one who values the relics of antiquity will be disposed to

deny.

Not far from the Rock was the white cottage of the custodian of the Holy Well, which in no way took from the impressiveness of the wild scene. The Well itself was blessed by the Lector O'Friel. of whom I have been able to find no reliable traditions. It is a small but abundant spring of iron-flavoured water, cool and refreshing on the hottest day of summer. The faithful have roofed it over in part to keep all impurities from its hallowed basin. Just in front of it is a watery patch of ground trimmed with the sturdy green sword-blades of the yellow iris. Before they drink of the water the votaries keep the stations of the Cross, saying certain prayers. They then make the desiul or sacred circuit of the Well, following the course of the sun. This they do a fixed number of times, which even reach as many as nine, on their bended knees. Then they drink, and tearing off a portion of one of their garments, they tie it to a twig of the bushes near. After that they go away healed, at least in their own thought. Quite close to the Well is a little forest of crutches swathed with bandages, left by those who have drunk and need them no longer.

The bushes beneath the Rock are covered with bits of rag and other personal tokens of faith. Just as the desiul has come down from pagan times, there can be little doubt that the devotees believe that their diseases actually enter into the rags and similar tokens which they have fastened to the available twigs. On 17th August, the day of the Feast of the Assumption of the Virgin, as many as seven

hundred pilgrims may be seen at the Holy Well of Doon; they use all manner of conveyances in addition to those provided by Nature. Side-cars, ponies, carts, donkeys and other things are used to bring the patients, often from great distances, while those who are unable to come, have the rites performed for them by some friend or relative. A "pattern" of this kind is no longer attended by the scenes of debauchery which were common during the first quarter of the last century. That was a direct survival of paganism, as indeed are many of the usages of the present. But I, for one, who have seen the votaries performing their religious exercises, have no inclination to scoff at the sincere faith of these warm-hearted, simple-minded people. How many are really healed, I do not know, nor have I ever cared to inquire: but I am very sure that their practice brings them great comfort and peace. have seen the Holy Well almost drunk dry by the patients themselves, or put into bottles to be carried to sick friends. I have heard of astonishing cases of complete cure. We have still to learn what an all-important part faith plays in the healing of diseases, at least of a certain kind. The commonplace patient has faith in his doctor, without which his drugs may perform certain functions but fail to effect a cure. The Irish peasant trusts his Holy Well; nor is there any sound reason why he should not sometimes at least be healed.

In the southern half of the county, near Narin, lies the Island of Inishkeel, that is the Island of Caoil, or Conal, which is united to the mainland by a broad isthmus of sand, when the tide is far out. On it are two very old churches, a holy well, and a curious block of stone shaped naturally into a sort of rude chair, which is connected with the name of St. Columba. On this little green island long ago dwelt two saints, Caoil (pronounced Keel) and Dallan, bound to one another by such strong

ties of friendship, that it was the prayer of each that both might rest at last in one grave. Caoil one day had gone to the mainland to transact some ecclesiastical business: during his absence a party of sea-rovers appeared, laid their hands on all that was worth plundering, and murdered St. Dallan. In a spirit of brutal mockery they cut off his head and threw it into the water, leaving his body lying in a sheltered nook of the island. Then they made off, singing their savage triumph-songs and rejoicing over such booty as they had been able to get.

Meanwhile, St. Caoil finished his business and returned to the island. He missed the wonted welcome of his friend who had been accustomed to meet him at the water's edge: anxiously he called his name, but there was none to answer. With sickening dread of what might have been, he began a careful search of the island, still calling, "Dallan, Dallan, my heart's treasure, where art thou? " still receiving no answer but the booming of the tide. He peered into every nook and cranny, until he found the headless body lying under a rock. Deep grief seized upon him; but he was not paralyzed by its poignance. Down he went on his knees and prayed with all the earnestness of his loving soul. As he prayed, his eyes wandered towards the waves. whereon he saw a marvellous sight. His murdered friend's head appeared floating swiftly over the surge towards the beach. When it reached its body the two joined together at once, though life did not return. With a sorrowing heart St. Caoil laid all that was left of his friend in a hallowed grave, and spent many days in mourning for his loss.

On Inishkeel he lived some years longer in rigorous devotion and pious exercises. At length he, in his turn, passed away in the odour of sanctity, whereupon the monks buried him in the same grave with his murdered friend. In this way the wish of both was fulfilled, and their tomb has been the

occasion of pilgrimages ever since. At certain times the little island is crowded with votaries, who have come from far and near to do honour to the memory of the two Saints, and to pray for their mediation in heaven. They recite the stations of the Cross, they perform the desiul round the Holy Well and the dual grave, they go back to their homes strengthened and comforted. No doubt this is a piece of antiquated superstition: but it has far more lasting effects upon those who indulge in it, than the modern superstition of incredulous indifference, which can work no miracles, real or imaginary. The people of Narin are intensely proud of their holy island, they rejoice to tell the story of the two Saints with all the picturesqueness of loving fancy. Those who listen to them cannot fail to catch something of their fervour, however far removed they

may be from its traditionary cause.

In the south-eastern corner of County Donegal, beneath bare and gloomy hills in the midst of a barren and inhospitable-looking region, lies the lonely Lough Derg. It is uncertain how it got its name of the "red lake"; but it may have come down from the story of some wound inflicted upon the spirit of the waters in prehistoric ages. Hither, during the early part of his missionary journeys, came St. Patrick to seek a space of retirement from the world. He needed to find strength for his arduous work in solitary prayer and meditation. He sailed across to one of the islands, whereon he found a grotto curiously shaped and deep. Here he lay lost in meditation, when sleep overcame him and a wondrous vision presented itself before his eyes. He dreamed that he saw Purgatory in all its terrors. filled to overflowing with the souls of the departed. Some of them were cleansed by the fires into a singular whiteness, and were beginning to ascend into heaven. They had fulfilled all needful penance for their sins, and were ready to join the saints who had gone before them. Others were gradually growing whiter, as their friends on earth prayed for them in person, and had Masses said for their souls. Others again grew ever blacker and blacker as they lay in the cleansing fire. These were the men and women who had committed mortal sin on earth, for whom there was no hope of forgiveness in the world to come.

The Saint awoke, but he did not forget the vision which had sunk into his very being: he consecrated the place, and built a church there which developed into a celebrated monastery. The ruins of the abbey and traces of St. Patrick's bed are to be found on Saint's Island, not on the Station Island of modern pilgrimages, as Dr. MacDevitt has pointed out. To this there was originally a causeway stretching to the margin of the lake, some of the ruins of which can still be seen below the surface of the water. To a spot thus consecrated by the presence of the national Saint, thousands of pilgrims come, each of whom sleeps in the "Saint's Bed," that is, on a bare flat rock, and undergo certain severe penitential exercises. They recite the stations of the Cross, they fast, they utter the prescribed prayers. But they are not constrained to perform the extreme penitence of the earlier days, when each had to sleep stark naked in the "Bed" for three days and three nights, fasting rigorously, as Colonel Wood Martin recounts.

Happy is the penitent who repeats the Saint's vision, when he sleeps in the "Bed." Should he be thus favoured he will without doubt escape some of the long periods of Purgatory, which bear some resemblance in duration to the epochs of geological time. At most times of the year multitudes of such pilgrims frequented the sacred spot, as they do still. Hence they caused no little trouble to the English Protestants in the early seventeenth century, who were disturbed alike by conscience and convenience.

I have no doubt that this is the one true "St. Patrick's Purgatory": there is a "Bed" of the Saint on Croagh Patrick in County Mayo, which has set up a rival claim upon quite inadequate evidence. All the way up that bare mountain are the stations of the Cross, which are not only recited, but kept by the *desiul* on bare knees, till the top is reached. But that practice does not prove that St. Patrick had his vision on that rugged dome of bare rock.

At the present there are quite as many pilgrims to Lough Derg as in the days of James I. Sorely troubled for the spiritual welfare of the souls of his Catholic subjects in Ireland, that sturdy Calvinist sent Sir William Stewart, amongst other statesmen, to see to them at the beginning of his reign. This dour Protestant, realizing the possible danger of the great concourse of people visiting this lonely lake, came in force to the Saint's Island, pulled down the monastery, laid hold of its treasure, destroyed all trace of the monks, and threw the sacred relics into the lake. That was the English way of conciliating the Irish, who were devotedly attached to their ancient faith. By such acts of honest vandalism they sowed the seeds of the frequent rebellions which disturbed their rule, the results of which have been felt right down to our own time. How long Lough Derg was deserted after this drastic treatment of its sacred shrine, it is not easy to say: but for a time Irishmen ceased to frequent its hallowed shores.

But they did not forget their ancient attachment to the place and the associations which it recalled to their minds. Every spot on which St. Patrick had set his foot became consecrated ground to them. Hence, in due time, the narrow rock of what is to-day called "Station Island" was crowned with buildings forming a sort of hostel for the pilgrims, who soon began to flock thither in great numbers. Most of the original exercises were resumed, except the

one noted above, the worst of which, in our own time, appears to be the rigorous fast imposed upon them. To-day the island is seldom without one or more pilgrims, principally of Irish stock, while upon stated occasions, such as St. Patrick's Day, it is thronged by a great multitude, who are not merely interested in the world to come, but hope for their restoration from many physical ailments. I have never been able to hold converse with a pilgrim on the spot, though I have seen more than one who has passed through the penance practised there. One of them was a devout young girl, who had been to many of the sacred places in Ireland to seek a cure for chronic rheumatism. She had not found it the last time that I saw her; but I could never prevail upon her to give any account of her visit to Lough Derg, which had made a deep and lasting impression upon

If we could return to the days of St. Patrick and see that lonely lake as it was when he saw his vision upon the "Saint's Island," we should realize what a solitary spot it was, how well calculated for devout meditation. Then the neighbourhood would be covered with dense forest, in which wolves could be heard howling through the night. The hills which rise from its border would be well-wooded; there would be no such roads as the Romans left wherever they set their martial foot. Only rude and barely discernible tracks would pierce the primeval forest, some made by the wolves or the wild deer, some trodden by the foot of man. The people themselves would be little better than savages, though they may have abandoned cannibalism by that time. It is true that St. Jerome expressly accuses the Irish of his day of that savage method of finding food, nor is it easy to get rid of an assertion of his, that he had actually seen Irish fellow-students of his, who were not then in Ireland, eating such things. Be that as it may, St. Patrick chose an awe-inspiring place for his retirement: even now the pilgrims must find the scene well calculated to remind them of their sins, and to awaken any superstitious tremors lurking in their souls.

I have not been able to trace any striking pagan associations with Saint's Island on Lough Derg, nor do there seem to have been "bawans" on its islands, or crannoges in its gloomy waters. most pagan part of the ritual after St. Patrick's time was the desiul: that we practise ourselves without being conscious of its pagan origin, whenever we deal out the cards for a quiet rubber. Neither could I hear of any water-demon, whose palace lay beneath its dark surface. It is true that the monkish annalists have done their best to eradicate all pagan traditions, or at least to have given them one or two coats of Christian varnish. But to me it seems certain that St. Patrick was the first person national importance to visit its shores, nor do I see any reason to doubt that he actually had the vision which is reported of him. It may be not a little fantastic in its application, but it cannot be denied that pilgrims during fifteen centuries have gone to it and still continue to do so, under the inspiration of an absolutely sincere devotion. Hence it is well for those who deride their superstition to beware that they themselves are not guilty of that loud laughter which betrays the vacant mind, and is often the mark of those who are tightly bound to favourite superstitions of their own.

I will end this brief consideration of the traditions of County Donegal with the record of a pagan legend, which may yet have a faint hint of history concealed beneath its semi-mythical trappings. On the road between Ardara and Narin lies a pleasantly situated little village named Kilclooney, about a mile from the present shore of Loughrosmore. It plays but a small part in the economy of its county to-day; but once it was one of the scenes of an

important though legendary event. Near it stands in a patch of heath one of the largest cromlechs in Ireland: its capstone consists of an erratic red granite boulder, rudely circular, with a diameter of twenty-one feet, and a thickness of from five to eight. It has four sturdy supports, of which the front pair are about six feet above the ground, and the hind pair about four and a half. Thus the capstone is inclined at an angle closely resembling the back of a frog. It is quite probable that the hind-pillars may have sunk beneath the enormous weight of the block. In the neighbouring field is a much smaller cromlech, the capstone of which has fallen off, and all the stones may easily have been

found in the district close at hand.

If a countryman be asked the name of this ancient monument, he will answer in Irish "Leabbe Diarmidh agus Grainnue "-I am not sure of the spelling, so plethoric in unnecessary consonants is the Gaelic-or in English "The bed of Diarmid and Grania." If he be one of the older men of the neighbourhood with but a few scattered traces of schooling about him, he may, if he chooses, tell a romantic story to account for the name. He will not tell the same story as is current in County Sligo to explain the same matter, but in my opinion, a pleasanter one and certainly more to the credit of the two lovers. No doubt the same name is given to most of the cromlechs, wherever they are found: but that fact matters little to a Donegal peasant, he has his own story to tell, and he tells it admirably. One such I met on the first occasion of my seeing the huge monument. He sat on the dry stone wall; though an old man he was remarkably active, and his mind was as quick in its movement as his body. He told me the legend with a stateliness which showed that he was translating from his native Gaelic: let me try to tell it in my own way, preserving his details, but not his manner of telling it,

In the fourth century of our era Finn MacCumhal (pronounced MacCool), or Fingal, was the great chief of the Fian heroes. In his boyhood he had been driven about by his enemies, who sought to prevent him from coming to the throne. Consequently he took service with a giant, who had caught the "salmon of knowledge," of which whosoever ate would obtain, within certain limits, foreknowledge of the future and the knowledge of things done by someone else in the immediate past. Finn was set to watch the cooking of this priceless fish with the strict command that he was not to suffer a blister to appear on its skin. The giant went about his business, the boy Finn watched the cooking, when, to his alarm, he saw a blister rising from the silvery skin. He pressed it with his thumb, then to soften the pain of the heat he put his thumb into his mouth. Instantly he felt himself filled with a knowledge such as he had never possessed before. When the giant discovered what had taken place, he turned out his servant in high dudgeon. But Finn retained the gift, which served him well in time to come. When he wanted to divine the truth of any matter, he was in the habit of pressing his thumb upon the tooth which had first tasted the juice of the salmon, and what he desired to know was revealed to him. That this method of divination was not infallible will appear in its place: like the Delphic Oracle its revelations were capable of bearing a double meaning.

Cormac MacArt, the King of Ireland, had a most beautiful daughter named Grania, or Grace, who was sought in marriage by the princely youth from all parts of Ireland. Finn, at this time the most powerful warrior of all, though sixty years of age and with his temples growing grey, sought out Cormac and demanded his daughter in marriage. What could Cormac do? Finn was ten times as powerful as he was, and he dared not refuse him



DIARMID AND GRANIA'S BED



his child. Besides, he was not a little flattered by this request from so famous a hero: without considering Grania's feelings in the slightest, he began favourable overtures with the mighty chieftain. Even to-day amongst the peasantry of many parts of Ireland, marriages are generally arranged as in France, by the parents of the contracting parties. I do not allege that none take place in the English way of what may be called natural selection; but I have had the full account of more than one pair of families in Connemara and the Isle of Achill. in which the number of cows offered in the dowry stood in the way of a completed match. other case the future bride and bridegroom scarcely knew one another even by sight. In any case, in the time of Cormac, Grania would be the last person to be consulted upon so important an event in her life as her bridal.

The wedding was to be celebrated at Cormac's court in Tara, where a great banquet was prepared in expectation of the honoured guest, who was so soon to be the king's son-in-law. In course of time Finn arrived, attended by a large company of the Fians, all dressed in princely splendour. Amongst them came his son, Oisin (Ossian), the Irish Orpheus, and his friend Diarmid O'Duibhne, a young and handsome warrior who at once captivated Grania's heart, as she took his captive. She looked upon her elderly wooer with great disfavour, nor was she willing to link her fate with his in spite of his glorious fame. The question arose as to how they could delude both Cormac and Finn and escape from the court at Tara. Oisin, of course, could not act against his father, though he promised Diarmid in no way to interfere between him and his love. The solution was left to Grania to find: the old Irish proverb says, "Where a woman has a will, she will find a way." Grania soon proved its truth to the full, though the consequences of her action with Diarmid

were fated to come home to both in a final

tragedy.

It was the custom at a certain moment in the feast for the daughter of the house to hand round in person what in this case may be called a "Gracecup" in more than one sense of the word. She had used her knowledge of herbs to further her purpose; she spiced the cup with what to-day would be called a strong opiate. All save Diarmid, Oisin and herself partook of the soothing cup, and after making a brief resistance sank at once into a deep and long sleep. Now was the opportunity for the lovers, nor did they hesitate to seize upon it. Over moor, bog, heath, mountain, river and lake they went with a speed not to be compassed in these days, rejoicing much in each other's company and smiling often to think how they had mocked two of the wisest men in all Ireland, Cormac and Finn. In this way, without danger or effort, they reached the heart of County Donegal long before the company at Tara had shaken the dews of slumber from their heavy eyes.

Now Diarmid knew all about Finn's "divining tooth" and the dangers with which it threatened the pair of them. He was therefore bound to find some plan of circumventing this unfair advantage of his elderly rival. When the lovers had arrived at Kilclooney he built the huge cromlech as a sleeping chamber, but provided himself with a large bag of heather which he spread on the ground whereon they were to lie. It must be borne in mind that Kilclooney lay fairly near to the sea, if the point of this stratagem is to be understood. Here then the lovers rested after their journey across Ireland, which was indeed a prodigious one to take in so short a time; but love and legend can lend wings even to a snail. Diarmid determined not to flee so far on the second day: about twelve miles off, due south of Glenties, is the peak of Carnaween, where to-day there is a similar cromlech though not on so huge a scale. Hither he led Grania, taking this time a bag of sand with him, which he strewed for their couch beneath the great stone. Between Kilclooney and Carnaween the lovers kept oscillating from night to night, never passing the night twice on the same spot. Thus they had to travel about twelve miles every afternoon, and on alternate evenings to climb a considerable mountain. But to what inconveniences will not love submit if only it

can achieve its object.

At Tara, Finn and his warriors, Cormac and his train slept long into the following day: at last they woke up, rubbing their eyes and wondering what had happened to them. Cormac, when he came to himself, clearly suspected some enchantment or other mischief; the first thing which he did was to look for his daughter, that he might see to the completion of her nuptials; but she was nowhere to be found. Similarly, Finn in his turn looked round for Diarmid, who was equally invisible. At first he began to reproach his son Oisin; but the bard stoutly denied that he had helped the lovers, nor could he tell where they were now hiding. Last of all, Finn had recourse to his divining tooth: "Where are the lovers?" he asked. The tooth replied plainly but vaguely, "They are on the heather." Forthwith Finn set off on his way in pursuit: he went straight to the mountain of Carnaween, where he found the cromlech but no lovers. Thereupon he once more applied his thumb to the tooth, asking the same question. The tooth once more made answer in a somewhat similar fashion, "They are on the sand." Finn straightway took his journey to Kilclooney, where he found the cromlech, but no lovers. Herein the skill of Diarmid's simple stratagem appears, which was able to mock the famous tooth.

Thus the lovers were able to enjoy the delights of

a stolen marriage for a year and a day, while they kept their pursuer, like a great pendulum, oscillating between the two cromlechs, but arriving at each just at the time when they themselves had left it. In the end the pleasing comedy, displeasing to Finn alone, reached a tragical conclusion. It may be that Diarmid on one occasion forgot to use his stratagem; at all events, the wise King, so long mocked in spite of his wisdom, came up with them; in his rage he put both of them to the sword, so that their eventful career ended when it had little more than begun. This form of the story is the County Donegal version, as I heard it myself while I sat by the cromlech at Kilclooney. Dr. MacDevitt has adopted it and told it far more dramatically than I could: but the old peasant who told it me had few of the flourishes of literature in his narrative style; yet he told it with a power and a subtle humour which made it inimitable and at the same time irreproducible.

The simplicity of Diarmid's device, and the naïveté which made it possible to allow the wisest of the pagans who had a means of divination peculiar to himself to be so long deceived by it, appealed strongly to my imagination, especially when my informant, clearly sympathizing with the young lovers, referred to Finn under the disrespectful title of "the ould blackgyard." Many of the other solitary cromlechs bear the same name with that of Kilclooney, and the lovers with much greater plausibility are said to have led Finn over the whole of Ireland. But I confess that I am more delighted with the Donegal version than with any of the others, both because of its ingenuousness and its strong local patriotism. I can imagine it told in Gaelic over a peat-fire on a winter's night with fine effect, for the Irish are naturally dramatic both in their telling of a story and in their lively gesticulation. My informant was the principal seannachie, or story-teller, of the district, and he richly deserved

the high estimation in which he was held.

Colonel Wood Martin has narrated the Sligo version, which is bound up with a large cave on the side of Benbulben, which is also called "the Bed of Diarmid and Grania," and is the only instance in which they are represented as having a roof over their heads during their flight. In this cave, Finn, who had married Grania, lived with her, when by some enchantment her heart was given to Diarmid. Here the two often met in the absence of her husband. and enjoyed stolen sweets. Furthermore, Grania had the reprehensible habit of sending Finn down to the shore on mythical, or at least unnecessary, errands. The moment that his venerable back was turned Diarmid was sure to appear. There is quite a modern flavour about this form of the legend, which I own does not appeal to me so strongly as the one I have attempted to reproduce. It might indeed form the plot of a present-day society novel with but a slight change of names and scene, a circumstance which proves the utter absence of originality amongst a large proportion of our modern novelists.

The foregoing are some of the bits of fairy-lore and legend which I was able to pick up from the lips of the peasantry, and in one case from a worthy priest, when I was on tramp through County Donegal about thirty years ago. I took as full notes as I could at the time, and as my narrators would permit. The moment that they saw my notebook and pencil, they proved as suspicious as Edie Ochiltree when Monkbarns desired to take down his evidence. They imagined that I was a "government-man," hence they became dumb at once. Few as are the notes, they illustrate with remarkable clearness the persistent survival of paganism side by side with the Christianity of the Roman Church. Not a word of disparagement to

the latter is intended by the juxtaposition of these two bases of thought. It is well-known that in missions despatched by the Pope himself, the missionaries were instructed in so many words to pay close attention to the men and women amongst whom they were to labour. Wherever it was possible, they were advised to adopt such practices as were harmless and to give them a Christian direction. That is both how and why so many pagan springs have become "Holy Wells," so many "holed stones" have been engraven with the Cross, at which not a few of the old pagan customs and rites are still observed, though they have been

translated into a Christian significance.

In its treatment of the wide-spread belief in fairies the Church found its position more difficult and embarrassing. It does not seem ever to have been able to banish completely that old-world superstition which lingers in out-of-the-way corners of the British Isles to-day. In the process of time the Irish appear to a large extent to have transformed the dead into fairies, though now and then slight differences may be perceived between the two classes of spirits. Hence it was necessary to find some place for the "good people" in the economy of the universe. Which of the missionaries it was who evolved the idea that the fairies were the angels who had remained neutral in heaven when the rebel Lucifer was hurled into hell, is not known. But he certainly deserves great respect for his ingenuity in turning pagan into what may without irreverence be called Christian superstition. Even St. Columba is said to have told the fairies that there was no hope for them at the Last Day, but that they would all go to hell.

Until I came practically face to face with a so-called "fairy changeling" and with the "fairy-doctor" who was summoned to dismiss it to its own place, I had little idea that so strong a belief in the

"good people" persisted in the British Isles. That pixies linger in Cornish fancy, I had discovered by noticing on a certain day many people wearing a sprig of St. John's-wort. Thirty years ago Sir Arthur Conan Doyle had not produced putative portraits of fairies taken by that deceitful instrument the camera. My only remark on his discovery is this: the camera can be made to tell as many lies as the operator wishes, so that even eminent men of science may be deceived. But about the Irish peasant there is little deception in this matter. Once win his confidence, and shy as he is of subjecting himself to unfeeling laughter, he will give much information which is alike interesting and valuable. Approach him as a sceptic, and the inquirer might as well talk to mute fishes. But if he is sympathetically handled, he can be induced to open his heart and give a real insight into some of the beliefs and

fancies which lie at the back of his mind.

Nor need any superior person feel constrained to laugh at his credulity, when well-known men of science are confirmed crystal-gazers and indulge in many similar pagan vagaries. Some of the most derisive rejoice in a "mascot," which is nothing more than a piece of purely pagan superstition. Furthermore, profound sceptic as I am in such matters, I have never heard a logical argument to prove the impossibility of the existence of fairies. It is usual to meet those who are tinged with such old-world beliefs with derisive laughter or a shrug of the shoulders, neither of which can prove or disprove anything on earth. To me, therefore, the fairy-fancies of the Irish peasant were of almost breathless interest. I tried to trace them to their source: I got as far as paganism, when I found myself faced with a dead wall, beyond which I was unable to penetrate. Comparative mythology, and even the "Golden Bough" helped me little, because fairies hardly come under the consideration of the

first, and their why and wherefore are not explained

by the second.

It must always be remembered that the famous civilization of the pagan Irish, painted in such glowing colours by the Christian chroniclers, was extremely limited in extent, and entirely failed to touch the great bulk of the population. The Princes and the Druids, after them the Princes and the Christian leaders, had indeed a civilization which was sufficiently advanced to win them some reputation in Europe. But the mysteries of the Druids, and after them the mysteries of Christianity. were kept jealously secret from the rank and file of the people, who clung tenaciously to the thoughts and beliefs handed down to them from their remote ancestors. To this day in the western islands and along the western coast linger plain traces of some of the most primitive thought of mankind. On the 1st of May and on the 1st of November, primitive customs are observed in spite of the schoolmaster, who in this respect has a greater influence than the priest himself. On St. John's Eve "baal-fires" are still lighted on many a hill, just as they have been lighted almost from the first moments after the discovery of fire.

It is only within my own memory that the banshee has ceased to be heard any longer wailing for the approaching death of a member of some noble family. I can myself remember the cruelty with which a hapless old woman, believed to be a witch, was burned in the presence of a large crowd. Seumas MacManus, of Mount Charles, in County Donegal, has collected a great number of deeply interesting fairy stories which he has retold with a vigour and a humour worthy of Samuel Lover himself. Whether he has invented many of them I do not know, but he claims to have heard most of them from the seannachies of his native county, and I fully accept his claim. He has the advantage of speaking Gaelic,

which is denied to me, else I do not doubt that I could have culled more vestiges of ancient beliefs and customs than the few I have tried to tell of in a far inferior fashion to that of their original narrators. The observer needs to have his eyes about him as well as his ears if certain customs, not immediately obvious, are not to escape him. Even so commonplace an action as spitting often has the same mystical meaning, which it has brought down with it from the past and is to be seen chronicled in many an old medical work issued by a learned physician.

I have labelled the story of Diarmid and Grania quasi-historical: though it is in great part legendary and comparatively late, it may deal with historical personages. I am aware that some over-wise mythologists wish to elevate Finn MacCumhal to the region of a solar myth, in spite of the fact that such explanations have become a by-word amongst the authorities on these topics. Its importance consists in the fact that it does reveal a primitive state of society, when kings and noblemen lived almost as plainly as the lowliest of their subjects. The once world-famous palace of Tara was simply a large wattled building, just as the merest hut was a small wattled building. Such a state of things continued long after the passing away of Finn; nay, it may be said to have endured into the time when the annalists told the most gorgeous tales of unspeakable splendour. This legend does give a peep into primitive society, which is not entirely without its counterpart in our so-called Christian Elopements are not unheard of to-day, though the bride-elect does not usually hocus the drink of the wedding-guests. But if she is determined to elope, there is no sound reason to prevent her, if that can in any way serve her turn.

But I must not pursue these reflections further, though they are born naturally out of the subject. Of the religious ceremonial at the Holy Well of

Doon and at Lough Derg, I wish to speak with deep respect, though in neither case does it appeal to my manner of thought on such high themes. In like manner, the "Nun's Grave" in Tory Island will always be hallowed in my mind, not because the fair young nun is said to be lying there, but because of the touching faith of the islanders and their devotion to her memory. Moreover, I have a real kindness to the Irish peasant, especially of the wildest and most remote parts of his beautiful land. Superstitious he may be in some respects; easily provoked he undoubtedly is, and in some cases he has little respect for human life. But he has a warm heart, a genuine desire to help a stranger on his way, a delightful humour, and a capacity for profiting by education when he really gets it, which have always endeared him to me. Some day he will set a firm foot upon the path of progress and there can be little doubt that he will surprise his captious critics.

Resurgat Ierne, et resurget.

## IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF SAINT COLUMBRILLE

There is a grey eye That looks back upon Erin; It shall not see during life The men of Erin, nor their wives. My vision o'er the brine I stretch From ample oaken planks; Large is the tear of my soft grey eye,
When I look back upon Erin.

—Saint Columbkille.

N the heart of County Donegal, not far from the village of Church Hill, lies the beautiful district of Gartan, or "the little field," which is an excellent centre for the exploration of the noble scenery and the legend-haunted regions of the north of the county. But it has a deeper interest to all who love to trace the footsteps of the great men of the past: it is the birthplace of "the Dove of the Churches," Saint Columbkille as the Irish love to call him, or Columba as he is known to other nations. That he earned to the full his Irish title is amply proved by his foundation of more than a hundred little churches and monastic settlements in his native county, and two hundred in the rest of Ireland and in Scotland. Three picturesque lakes nestle beneath the lesser mountains of the sheltered valley, upon which his eyes must often have rested in his boyhood. Here he learned that love for Erin, which is touchingly shown in the lines at the head of this study, and he is said to have written when on his way to his last resting-place in Iona.

Yet for one who knows Gartan well at least a hundred have journeyed to spend a careless hour in

the Scottish island. That is part of an arranged excursion, which it is considered "the thing" to take, when in the neighbourhood. The vast majority of the English people, with that culpable ignorance of Irish history and most things Irish which is their common characteristic, in all probability have never even heard of the name of Gartan, much less of the fact that Columba was born there on 7th December, A.D. 521. If they have heard of the Saint himself and learned the name of his birthplace, most of them would not have the faintest idea of its whereabouts. It may be that our nation fails to appreciate the fact that during the early Saxon period it learned most of its Christianity from this Irishman, while Scotland was even more widely blessed by his missionary labours. Because the Irish differ from ourselves, while they cling to their freedom with a kindred obstinacy, it has long been the fashion to denounce them as a race never to be satisfied with the government which contents every Briton.

Gartan Lough is a fine sheet of water bordered on the east and west by well-wooded hills of a considerable height, at the head of which lies the bare brown Glendoan valley. The northern shore is enclosed by low hills, which in the month of May are aflame with golden gorse breathing forth its sickly fragrance over tens of thousands of starry primroses. On the western side is the charmingly situated St. Colomb's Hotel, which in spite of its inconspicuous bar affords all the quiet comforts of a private house. It has pleasant grounds and an immemorial rookery, the inhabitants of which seem always busy, and produce a wonderful variety of tones from their hoarse call. For myself, I have little doubt that they have a language of their own, which it would be of great advantage to man to learn, though his vanity might not be flattered by the contempt for him and his works shown by these wise birds. I saw one over-



GARTAN LOUGH



balance itself while tugging at a stick for its nest; whereupon it said "Caw!" with all the fiery emphasis of a human being who has tumbled down

an unexpected step.

On the opposite side of the lake is the fine rambling mansion of Glenveagh House with its winding avenue and Titan amongst rhododendrons, almost as big as the house and dyed with deep crimson at the time when the gorse is in bloom. The river Lennan flows out of the lake under Gartan Bridge, famous alike for its trout and its salmon. Save in the rookery and amongst the morning and evening choir of birds a soothing quiet pervades the fair landscape, which has forms and colours peculiar to itself. Not far away is Lough Nacully, a tiny tarn fringed with brown rushes and "winking Mary-buds" in the spring season, dreamily rippling along its reedy margin. Stretching northward is the bare Lough Akibbon with its boggy shores and its patches of vividly green pasture dotted over with browsing kine and ubiquitous sheep. It is a tranquil scene of rare beauty to-day, where stand comparatively prosperous farms and reasonably good roads. Hardly more than fifty years ago flax was grown in the neighbourhood, and the large crusher may be seen on a knoll overlooking Gartan Lough. But the linen industry has now departed from County Donegal to the Ulster of James I.'s Plantation, so that the fields with their haze of delicately blue blossoms are found there no longer.

Fourteen hundred years ago the landscape would be wild and picturesque, when cultivation was almost unknown save in the most rudimentary manner. The three lakes, the green hills would indeed be there; but no smiling farms would give a homely beauty to their flanks. Only a few wattled huts or stone cloughans, if there were enough loose stones to build them, would take the place of cottage and farm. The forest would cover most of the ground and be alive with packs of wolves and herds of red deer: the pine marten would haunt its favourite trees, which thirty years ago had not quite deserted the district in spite of the scarcity of pine-trees. High overhead, every day the mighty eagle would sail through the air, where I have seen it myself within the last twenty years. There would only be faint tracks, where roads are to be found well laid and not too rough: the hills on each side of Lough Akibbon would descend to the water's edge with scarcely a clearing of any kind upon them, save where some rocky

summit would not suffer trees to flourish.

The present road on the western slope would seem to follow an ancient path: not far from its course at the entrance of a lonely valley leading by Lough Inshagh to Glenveagh is a rude flagstone still surrounded by what appears to be the foundation-ring of a cloughan, whereon the Saint was born. A fine white cross, erected by Mrs. Adair, marks that hallowed spot, to which many an emigrant still comes in the belief that he will leave all homesickness behind him. Many a woman may be seen kneeling by its side, praying to be spared the acuter pains of child-birth. It is not a little singular, that an ecclesiastic who showed such a dislike for woman as Columbkille did, should be trusted for aid in such matters. It has been said that he would have no cows near any of his monasteries, for he said, "Where there is a cow, there is a woman, and where there is a woman there is mischief." Yet expectant mothers confidently believe that they win relief by prayer at the stone on which he was born. I have seen them by twos and threes with that devout reverence which is so common in Ireland, and their lips moving all but silently, as they crossed themselves from time to time. Then they rose from their knees with brightening eyes and went on their way, their hearts throbbing with peace and hope. That ancient hut would have a diameter of from

twelve to fourteen feet: at first sight it might seem but a lowly habitation for the birthplace of so great a saint, and those who know little of the Irish civilization of his day might reasonably imagine that his rank was as lowly as his earliest home. Yet he was born of a princely line on both sides of the house: his father was a lineal descendant of Nial " of the Nine Hostages," the Ard-Righ or chief King of Ireland, while his mother, Ethne, sprang from the royal house of the monarchs of Leinster. Had his inclination turned in that direction, so great was his ability, so distinguished his lineage, the boy might have been King, or at least one of the lesser kings of his native land. But his heart was set upon the Church; a monk and missionary he would be, and he became both with an influence only surpassed in his own time by that of Saint Patrick himself. In those far-off days peasant and prince were housed with little difference: the rough wife of the kern lay on as rugged a bed as the princess of the tribe; a stone slab and a stone pillow served both alike in the wild region of Tyrconnell.

Close to his birthplace, overlooking Lough Akibbon, are the ruins of a tiny chapel or abbey, the original of which he may himself have established to commemorate the scene of his birth. It consists of two small chambers, the church proper and a room of nearly the same size, parted from it by a wall of solid masonry, in which a handful of ancient monks may have slept and taken their meals. The pointed arch of its doorway is made of two stones cut into a Gothic pattern; the door itself is low and narrow, though no doubt it has admitted many men of might, and "chief women not a few." The walls are thick, and for the most part made of large stones, though they can hardly be called Cyclopean. The window is narrow and long; its arch is rounded and cut out of a single stone, while it is deeply splayed to let in more light. The altar has gone, but one of its flags lies under the

window where it stood once; and more than one devotee kneels piously before it at the present time.

Within the building is the monumental slab of one of the early O'Donnell chieftains, carved with the "blood-red hand," which was the badge of their race. It had been foretold to a number of young princes that the one who first touched its shore should rule over Tyrconnell. As the boat drew near to land, the youthful O'Donnell cut off his right hand and flung it upon the beach, so that the prophecy was fulfilled in his person. Many of the peasantry show grave disrespect for the badge of their former chieftains; not a few of them call it "the donkey's foot," though their imagination outruns any real resemblance. Behind the abbey is a very ancient graveyard, in which many others of this once famous family have been laid to rest. Near the road in front are two rude crosses, each cut out of a single stone, such as might have come from Columbkille's own hand. They are much battered, and one of them has lost an arm; but they are reverenced none the less by the passers-by.

At Temple Douglas, some seven miles away along the road to Letterkenny, still stand the battered ruins of a little thirteenth or fourteenth century abbey, so small that they seldom tempt the pilgrim to Gweedore to pause for a moment to inspect them. Yet the mouldering church has a fine window of two round-headed lights, the outer mullions of which end in a Gothic arch, while over them and between their tops is a light shaped not unlike the ace of spades. The effect of the whole is singularly graceful, and not common in that part of the country. On the outside, almost facing the window but at some distance, is a curious fragment of wall densely covered with ivy and creepers, which may be a bit of the original To-day a seat is set under the leafage, where he who cares may sit and meditate on the past. Many noteworthy tombs are to be found in the untidy graveyard, some of which appear to be of great age, and one was probably that of some former abbot of

about the eleventh century.

Here in the winter of 521 stood a far more ancient and primitive set of buildings. No record has come down to us of their character and appearance, but it is not impossible to reconstruct them from those of similar places which still survive. The cells would most probably have been of the "cloughan" or beehive order, with low doors, and built entirely without mortar of any kind. The church would be a little oblong building with a flat-topped window, or one surmounted by two flags inclined against one another. Its walls would be of great thickness to support the weight of a stone-roof lifted on neither joists nor rafters, and fashioned on the principle of a rectilinear arch, if such an expression may be used. The door would have an immense lintel and inclined jambs, on the principle of an Egyptian tomb. Or possibly the building may have resembled the drystone Oratory of Gallerus, which looks like a boat with an up-turned keel. A flag with an incised cross would stand on the altar, possibly another of smaller size would adorn the gable.

In such a primitive church on the site of the more modern abbey was Columbkille baptized: two names were given to him strangely contradictory of one another. He was named in Irish, Crimthan or "the wolf," and in Latin, Columba or "the dove." In a certain limited sense he fulfilled both of them; he grew up to be hot-tempered as a son of his high family might well be, but gentle for the most part, and endowed with a wonderful capacity for attracting the undying love of his associates. It was a wild scene upon which his eyes opened in life, which helped to make him not only an ecclesiastic but a bard of some compass and much pathos, if indeed the songs attributed to him be really his. There seems no sufficient reason for denying them to him;

indeed, they thrill with just the piety and deep love of Erin which we should expect to have been his. If his birth-stone can really cure other Irishmen of home-sickness, he himself was never able entirely to subdue his yearning love for the home which he had left finally. It is told of him in Iona that he charged his monks to tend kindly a weary heron which had sunk fainting near his monastery, because "it had come from Erin and would return thither when it had recovered strength." Nor can it be doubted that

he would fain have followed the bird.

The little abbey where he was baptized is still an object of veneration to many pilgrims at certain seasons of the year. To me it was sacred for his sake, when I paced meditatively its mouldering church. I attempted but in vain to summon up from the past the day on which his father and his mother brought him to the rude christening font, and the reverend abbot bade them to "name this child." It would be a very humble ceremony if compared with the gorgeous gathering at a royal baptism in our own time. The church would not hold a tithe of the throng which musters in Westminster Abbey on such occasions. Yet Columbkille was a child destined to grow into a man, who would achieve far more for the uplifting of his fellow-men than most royal personages taken all together have been able to achieve. The Glashagh River, if I remember its name aright, flows past the precinct, wherein the old monks would be wont to catch their meals for fastdays. But its waters have long flowed, everchanging, into the sea, and the memory of tradition is no less unstable than they.

Six miles from the Saint's birthplace, on the road from Letterkenny to Dunfanaghy, are the ruins of the larger Franciscan Abbey of Kilmacrenan in a state of great dilapidation. The small square tower is still standing, and may date back to the early fourteenth century. The outline of the church can be traced:



THE LENNAN AND GARTAN LOUGH



here and there huge fragments of thick wall tell of the care with which the builders of a less civilized age went about their work. The Protestant church has been constructed of some of the masonry of the more ancient building and on the site of Saint Nenain's monastery. Some of the finer pieces of carving have gone to enrich the native plainness of the later building, where they show not a little oddly amongst the absence of ornament which distinguishes so many Irish churches of its kind. Here, too, the River Lennan flows rapidly along, which is best known to-day not as the stream which Columbkille saw and loved, but as a fishing stream of much local renown.

The pleasantly situated village of Kilmacrenan has grown beneath the shadow of the ancient abbey, which was once surrounded by great forests and lay far from the busy scenes of more active life. It was customary for the children of princely houses to be brought up by foster-parents. To Kilmacrenan, Columbkille was sent in the early years of his life, where he was committed to the care of a family of O'Firghils, of whose tribe some are said still to survive in the hamlet. Here he took the first steps in his education, and learned to love the Church and its ministers with passionate devotion. A kinsman of his was abbot at the time, who watched over him with sedulous care. Here, too, he grew to love the wild and beautiful landscape which surrounded him on every side. Here he listened to the howling of the wolves or the fierce screams of the eagles, or helped the good fathers to catch trout from the stream flowing near. Here he certainly learned to sing the Psalms in that beautiful voice which was one of his distinctive possessions.

In a green field just below the graveyard is the ruined survival of the first days of the monastery: a roofless little cloughan lies sheltered on a green bank, into which one side of it is almost embedded.

The original door, in great part, is left; it is not much more than two feet in height, breadth and depth, so that the monks who slept in it would have to crawl through it on hands and knees. It is said that they and their forbears slept in the attitude of sitting down leaning against the bare walls of such build-It is quite likely that the rest of the cells at the foundation of the original community were of this kind, clustering together like the bee-skeps of a former generation in an old-fashioned garden. It is the one solitary relic of the fifth and sixth centuries left to tell the tale of a humbler foundation for men no less devout, no less scholarly than their betterhoused successors. This very cell may well have been in existence when he was learning the elements of the religious life. It may even have been the one in which he slept or kept his vigils in those far-off days.

When he grew older he was sent to Saint Finnian's school at Moville, in County Down, from which in due time he passed on to one of the most famous schools of his day at Clonard, on the Boyne, to be under the tuition of either the same or another more celebrated Saint Finnian. The rules of those primitive communities were very strict: the abbot reigned with absolute authority over monks But their first care was for the and novices alike. poor, whom they served with rare unselfishness and brotherly kindness. In like manner they kept open house for all strangers, on the advent of any of whom the rigour of the rules was to a certain extent relaxed. Yet the hardship of their life never acted prejudicially upon their health, for they were a notoriously longlived race. No doubt the fact that they were sheltered from the continuous conflicts of their country helped them to reach extreme old age. Moreover, even at that time the monks were learning to be the greatest illuminators of manuscripts in Europe.

After spending some time with Master Gemman,

the chief of the bards of Leinster, Columbkille took orders in due course. From the poet he learned his love of the bards and their music, which enabled him to settle a dispute between their order and the Irish King at Drumceat, as will be seen in its place. Lastly, he spent some time in fitting himself for his self-chosen task at Glasnevin, where an old fellowpupil of his, under St. Finnian, held a noted school. His studies here were cut short by the advent of the plague, which drove him back to his native county. As he reached the boundary-stream he is said to have prayed that the pestilence might never cross their waters, with result that his prayer was answered. By this time he had won his name of Columbkille, by which he was known to his Irish contemporaries and I have therefore adopted. He looked about him to find a site suitable for his first monastic establishment, of which he was to found such a multitude in

his long life.

Just within the borders of County Donegal, on a hill overlooking the lovely waters of Lough Swilly, stood the "Grianan of Ailleach," or the "plaisaunce" of the northern kings of Ireland. Near to this some of his great kinsmen had a lesser fortress known as Calgagh Derry, which they handed over to him out of admiration for his learning and his piety. Here he founded his first and favourite monastery on the site of the present City of Derry, which still bears its name from the oak-wood by the side of which the community settled. This foundation soon gained a high reputation throughout Ireland, and many monks from distant places came to study within its walls. Its memory is preserved by the name of Long-tower Lane in the more modern city, where for many centuries stood a lofty round tower, which would not be built in his day. The Protestant Cathedral, which has the distinction of being the first Protestant Cathedral built in Ireland, has been dedicated to him, who well deserved the tribute to his memory.

But he did not, like many of his contemporaries, confine himself to this one piece of work: he is said to have founded a hundred churches, each with a small monastic establishment attached to it, in his native county alone. That may well be a loving exaggeration, but it does serve to illustrate his unwearied activity and his steadfast devotion. I do not intend to follow him round these churches, even if the task were possible, though I have seen many connected with his name. Nor do I purpose to trace his career in Iona, though I may have to allude to one or two events connected with it. Of those outside of Donegal, if Derry be excepted, the most famous monastery was Durrow, in King's County, of which scarcely a trace remains. Here he is said to have written and illuminated that exquisite work of art, the "Book of Durrow," which is still to be seen in Trinity College, Dublin. It contains the Latin Gospels of the Vulgate, and the manuscript is actually signed by his name. Some scholars think the colophon in which this signature occurs is too filled with mistakes to be from his hand; to me it is its own witness, and be it remembered that "good Homer nods."

He also founded Kells, where a cross dedicated to him, if not cut by him, is still to be seen. It is barely possible that he may have penned and illuminated the world-famous "Book of Kells," which is the envy and the despair of modern illuminators. Be that as it may, his fame as a devoted Christian missionary and saint was growing all over Ireland. He is said to have been tall and stately, with handsome features and exceptionally brilliant eyes of that blue-grey so common amongst his countrymen, though he was destined to lose one of them, if tradition speak the truth. Like Saint Patrick he was not commissioned by Rome, nor did he owe any allegiance to the Papal See: he adopted the form of tonsure on the front instead of on the back of the

head; nor did he observe the Roman date for the celebration of Easter. Like the primitive Christian missionary his inspiration was his own direct call from God, though in most points of doctrine he

differed little from the Roman hierarchy.

It is not easy to divine the reason which led him to choose the sites of some of his foundations. The tradition of the founding of that on Tory Island is so largely mingled with legend, that it gives no historical enlightenment on this point. He is said to have been travelling in company with a band of his disciples on the opposite mainland, when he declared that one of the party ought to preach the Cross in that lonely spot. They considered with themselves for a little while and came to the conclusion that he was chosen to fulfil this difficult duty whose staff, when plunged into the sea, was the first to land upon the island. Columbkille's staff outdistanced all the rest, swimming against wind and tide until it came safely ashore on Tory. Accepting the omen, with a party of his monks he chartered a boat, followed his staff, and came into sharp conflict with the King, who refused to give him any land as a site for the monastery. Columbkille then asked him to give him as much land as his cloak would cover. The King accepted this proposal; whereupon the cloak swelled into such a size that it completely covered the island.

Dismayed by the portent yet angered at being turned out of his inheritance, the King came to terms with the Saint, who founded a small monastic establishment there, by which he soon converted all of the islanders. The little community was destined again and again in after years to be sacked and plundered by the savage northmen. The cross, almost certainly his, holds its original position; the round tower cannot date very long after his time. The two are perhaps the rudest and most primitive objects of their kind in Ireland. It may be well to

set down in passing, that these characteristic buildings were Christian in origin; they were used as a kind of monastic fortress, as bell-towers, and possibly as beacons to guide pilgrims to the monastery, of which they formed a part. Of the rest of the buildings but few traces survive to show where he lived and worked for a time, until his community was able to take care of itself. As far as I can judge, he remained for a short time with most of his monasteries, leaving them in charge of some trusted disciple, when they could stand without his supervision.

It is not easy to date Columbkille's visit to that wild glen, which was destined to bear his name to all time. Glencolumbkille to-day is one of the wildest spots in a singularly wild county: situated on each side of the Murlin River it is hemmed in by gloomy hills, of which those having a sea-front present a series of savage precipices. Half the year it is said to be enveloped in mist and storm. strong causeway crosses the upper end of the tempestswept little bay, into which the river flows. as it is the causeway needs constant attention, so destructive are the waves driven against it by the fierce gales of the Atlantic. The modern village lies chiefly upon the southern slope of the glen: it is not attractive in itself, and does little to take away from the loneliness of the scene. A large Catholic chapel serves the needs of a wide but thinly populated area, while the neat little Protestant church was, when I last saw it, in charge of a rector whose reputation stood so high with the people of the neighbourhood that he was the arbiter of all disputes between Protestants and Catholics alike.

In the time of Columbkille the glen would be absolutely solitary, especially when it was believed to be in the possession of evil spirits. Manus O'Donnell, his relative and latest biographer, has preserved a remarkable legend relating to Finn

MacCumhal, or MacCool, which links the former national hero with the future Saint. This great warrior and sportsman was hunting in southern Donegal when an unusually fine stag appeared in front of him, and at once attracted the attention of his famous dog, Bran, and himself. He set off in pursuit with Bran leading the way: with perfect ease the stag kept well in front of them, until it came to the River Murlin. Without an apparent effort it crossed the stream and stood perfectly still on the farther To the intense astonishment of Finn, his hitherto tireless dog refused to cross the river, but remained standing rooted to the spot on the same bank with himself. Bran had never been known to fail before, never a hart, however swift, had escaped him, and later he met his death in a chase too great

for his strength.

The chieftain knew that some dark mystery overhung the dog's present conduct: resolved to fathom it to the bottom he consulted his "divining tooth," which immediately gave him a clear answer. child Columba will be born in due time of the stock of Cormac MacArt, who will be a great light in Ireland, and found many churches and monasteries. The region to which the stag has fled will be sacred to him, and a place of refuge to all succeeding generations." Manus adds that in his lifetime, in the fifteenth century, the way whereby the stag had fled was still known as "the path of the stag." I heard one old man use these words in the course of ordinary conversation; but I could not induce him to explain them; either he knew little of the legend, or he refused to tell me all that he knew. That often happens with the Irish country-folk, who dread any ridicule being poured upon traditions in which they themselves believe with all their heart. Still it was singular to hear so much as the mention of the name. which, no doubt, had been handed down to the old man through a long series of ancestors.

The only other place in the county where I came upon a tradition of Finn has already been recorded in connection with the cromlech of Kilclooney. There the tale told to me was vivid in the telling and clear in every detail, as if the events narrated had happened within the week. As I have said before, the mind of the Irish peasant, like that of his kinsman the Scottish Highlander, is tenacious of his national traditions. Hence I am confident that this particular story of Finn is older than the time of Manus O'Donnell. It is worth noting that Saint Columbkille's relative and earlier biographer, Adamnan, credits him with a wonderful gift of prophecy no less than a capacity for working miracles. Hence it seems possible that this prophecy of his birth to Finn by means of his wonderful tooth may have grown out of that belief. Indefinite prophecies are often fulfilled; definite prophecies which are precise in detail

are usually though not always posthumous.

The Saint in all probability chose this retired spot for a monastery to secure the solitude and quiet needed for holy meditation. His biographer gives another reason for his choice. He says, in effect, that an angel warned Columbkille in a dream that his presence was needed in the "Sean Glan" to drive out a company of demons, who had fled thither from Croaghpatrick under the force of the heavy maledictions hurled at them by Saint Patrick. Columbkille was not "disobedient to the divine vision." At once he made all needful preparations, which indeed were quite simple, and taking a band of his disciples with him, including Cearc, he set out on his journey to the lonely glen. When he arrived he found it covered with a darkling mist which hid it from his sight. Such regions of mist were always esteemed favourable to meditation by the early Irish monks, and many of their single cells and churches are to be found crumbling away in places far from the traffic of everyday life.

When Columbkille appeared there was a mighty tumult amongst the demons, one of whom hurled a heavy club at the Saint's friend, Cearc, and killed him on the spot. In great indignation the missionary caught up the weapon and hurled it back into the darkness from which he could hear the yells of the demons. It rooted itself in a cleft of the rocks and was turned into a holly tree, which may still be seen by the curious, though it must be confessed that its representative to-day is by no means fourteen hundred years old, but comparatively modern. The angel who had appeared in the dream did not leave the Saint alone in his terrible conflict, but gave him a bright blue stone, curiously carved, and a bell to help him in his hard task. It may be noted in passing that there is nothing so utterly hated by the devil and his imps as a bell. Every time Columbkille threw the stone amongst them, the mists which they gathered around them melted away, and terrible fear fell upon them. The conflict was long and arduous, but the Saint never lost courage or confidence in ultimate victory, and his comrades were borne up by his dauntless front.

At last, raising his ringing voice above the clamour, he commanded the fiends to take themselves off into the sea. The words had scarcely left his lips when a terrific crash followed like a sudden clap of thunder, the earth shook beneath the feet of the little company who stood undaunted around their undaunted chief. The solid rock was cleft into a yawning chasm down which the fiends vanished with frightful yells, and the glen was left in peace to be called "the Holy Glen" ever afterwards. The cleft in the rock is still shown to the curious, whose scientific explanation of its natural cause would be scouted as impious by the peasantry of the glen. By angelic hands the blue stone and bell were brought back to the Saint and laid before his feet. The former wrought many miracles in the aftertime until

it vanished in the earth: the bell was jealously guarded, and is still believed to be guarded, in some hidden spot of the glen to this day. Its tongue is said to have been found by a peasant many years after the disappearance of the crew of fiends.

Such is the legend, which has a certain beauty of its own, and may in part have arisen from the mists and clouds which are blown up from the Atlantic for so many months of the year. The Glen itself, in spite of its village, is exceptionally wild: its northern boundary ends in the precipitous cliffs of Glen Head, crowned by its ruined signal-tower. The rocks have an all but perpendicular height of over eight hundred feet; either from beneath them in a boat, or from the neighbouring cliff of the Sturrall, they present an awe-inspiring sight. The Protestant church is said to have been built upon the exact site of the ancient monastery. The ground was excavated nearly a century ago by Dr. William Petrie, but of the results little is known. Within the last forty years the sexton of the Protestant graveyard was digging a grave when his spade suddenly went right down into the earth and almost threw him on his face. Leaving go of it in the midst of a confusion of falling earth, it entirely disappeared from sight, and went, as he was firmly convinced, to the lord of those fiends, who had once occupied the glen. It is perhaps needless to add that with "blue effrayed eyes" he fled incontinently to the rector, who succeeded in composing his fears with the aid of a stiff dose of spirits of another kind.

Further examination showed that he had lighted upon a souterrain, or underground place of refuge, where primitive men and women had found refuge against their foes, and a safe sleeping-place from wild animals. When it was opened out the artificial cave consisted of several chambers, including a large square one which had once been roofed over. That may be called the vestibule to the other chambers,

which were built of walls of huge stones covered over with stones as huge. Into one of these the women and children would be thrust, while the men stood to arms in the first chamber. In a little time their enemies learned an effective way of dealing with shelters of this kind; they kindled a fire and smoked their victims out, as if they had been so many bees. I have little doubt that further exploration would lay bare a string of such caves, designed both for ordinary life and protection in danger. Somewhere there would be a removable key-stone, the site of which would be well-known to the inhabitants and

would admit them to their "city of refuge."

On the other side of the southern hill bounding the glen there has been a great battle-ground of prehistoric man. At one time many of his cromlechs were standing, some of them built of enormous stones. There are besides two curious structures, one of which may have been a stone fort or "cashel," while the other partakes of the nature of sepulchral monument. Significantly it is not known as a "cashel" by the natives of the neighbourhood, but as "cloghanmore" or "the great stone-house." A strong oval enclosure contains two roofed chambers, though some of the cap-stones have fallen, boundary-lines of huge stones, and a long shelf or slab partitioned in one place, as if meant to support urns. Some of the finest of the cromlechs have since been thrown down and broken up by the hands of utilitarian vandals. This lonely part of County Donegal has perhaps been treated a little scurvily by antiquarian authorities, though it might prove worth their while to excavate the remains, as the coast is commonly too storm-swept to have been visited often by Scandinavian sea-rovers.

It will therefore be seen that the "Holy Glen" may well have had a considerable number of barely civilized inhabitants at the time of Columbkille's arrival thereat. Some most precious relics of his

presence, and possibly of his handiwork, still survive to provoke the wonder of ease-loving pilgrims at the hardihood of these old Irish monks. There are at least twelve carefully shaped flag-stones set up on end either in clefts of the rocks or on mounds of fairly large stones, and incised with very early crosspatterns. One stands near the lane leading to the Protestant church, where I am convinced that the Saint set it up himself. It is quite possible that he carved it with his own hand; he was known to have possessed great skill in such work, and the pattern is of an ancient type which may perhaps be called the "key-style," bearing close affinity to the Greek pattern. It is deeply cut and the flag is engraved on both sides. This particular cross is fixed in a cleft of solid rock and overlooks the stormy little Glen Bay. Another similarly carved cross has a small hole cut through its upper portion, which no doubt

served for some sacred purpose.

The Saint may have found a pagan "holed stone" and Christianized it by cutting a cross upon it. Such stones seem at first to have formed a part of pagan worship: the aperture in the beginning was large enough to admit of the passage through of a human being. Later, it was gradually contracted, so that the stone was probably used to add solemnity to a treaty or a bargain, the parties to which would clasp hands through the hole. Doubtless such practices point to a primitive worship of stones, of which there is a hint in the story of Jacob, who, after his dream, anointed the stone with the offerings usual in such cases. When these smaller-bored "holed stones" were blessed by a saint and a cross cut upon them, they were supposed to have great healing virtue. The handkerchiefs or pieces of the clothing of the sick were passed through the hole with certain prayers, and healing was confidently expected to follow. This practice still survives in Inishmore, the largest of the three "South Isles of Aran" in Galway Bay, where I have seen it

performed.

Standing on a little hill is a dry-stone unroofed building, or enclosure, made of carefully selected stones chosen so as to fit one another. It is but a small place; the wall is about five feet above the ground for the most part, though in some places it is higher. In the north-eastern corner lies the "Saint's Bed," upon which he actually slept as it would seem in the open air. It is a rough, uneven flag-stone, set in a sort of frame of smaller stones just big enough for him to lie upon, from which he would be parted simply by his clothes, which he wore when he went to rest. As I stood and looked at it, my mind went back over the centuries; I thought within myself, that here was a missionary indeed, who needed no comfort, whose courage was unshaken by the unseen world, or by the savage forces of nature. I do not think that this building was ever roofed over; the enclosure was possibly intended to keep out wild beasts and would be closed by a large flag-stone. He may have had a stone-hut near the "Bed," as there is another small enclosure not far off. But certainly he was prepared to "endure hardship as a strong soldier of Jesus Christ."

Over the "Bed" is a recess in the wall, in which

there lay at the time of all my visits a consecrated stone bearing a rude resemblance to a human eyeball. That stone goes into many parts of Ireland to cure weak sight, and even positive blindness, because the Saint was blind of one eye. It is not, of course, the blue angelic stone, to which I have alluded before, nor can I say if it dates back to the time of Columbkille. But there it was; to that niche it is invariably brought back by those who have sought its aid. The faith in its healing power is boundless, though I have not heard of any actual cures by its means. To any failure there was always one touching answer, "I had not faith enough." Near this stone were a few little votive offerings, which included a small brooch of some apparent value, which would remain there until the Atlantic storms had crumbled it into pieces. There was also a tiny fair curl, evidently cut from the head of some little sufferer, which moved me deeply. Thus from parent to child, in Ireland the faith is handed down until it becomes a part of Nature itself.

Columbkille's chair stands not far from this sacred place: it is a naturally shaped block of stone, which is probably where it was left by the ice of centuries ago. He was too active a man to spend much time sitting on it, though he loved to gaze upon the gathering of a storm over Glen Head. The "Holy Well" is some distance up a steep path on the side of the Head. When I first saw it, there was a comparatively small pile of stones around it. Within less than twenty years the pilgrims have been so numerous, and each has carried his particular stone to add it to the heap, that the mound has grown to a very great size. It may be noted in passing that this carrying of stones to add to a cairn or lay on a grave, is a survival from pagan times. To reach the actual well the pilgrim must pass through a veritable valley of piled up stones, which extend to a considerable height and for many yards. The Well is arched over with a big flag, which in its turn is heaped up with stones, until another flag is reached which serves as a On it are set cups of various kinds for drinking side by side with a number of offerings from the various pilgrims.

Most of these were personal objects of one kind or the other; there was a string of glass beads, obviously left by some village maiden; there was quite a number of hair-pins of various ages and quality, which had undoubtedly been left by women cured of the headache. As I have told elsewhere there was one of the nails of a horse-shoe, whereby I knew that some poor hack had been supposed to have derived benefit. With the exception of the holly tree and one or two in the rectory-garden, there is hardly a bush on that bare hillside; the Well itself is fenced in with stones of all sizes, arranged in a double embankment, the two arms of which meet at the back of the spring. Hence the pilgrims who offered strips of their clothing were obliged to attach them to a piece of root fixed in the stones, or to wedge them between the smaller pebbles. Of these strips there was a good number, so that one patch of the embankment was covered with them as thickly as one of those rugs so common in the

north of England.

The whole scene at the Well, shut in by the huge mounds of stones, gave me a profound sense of solitude which was almost oppressive. The last time that I saw it, a little girl and an aged man sat by its waters, the veritable emblem of spring and winter. Both were imbued with a firm faith in the healing virtues of its waters. The old man, with an awed tone, said that hundreds of pilgrims had attended at the last pattern there, and "nivver a one, but had gone back healed, thanks be to God." I do not imagine that this particular spring had any pagan associations connected with it in the far past: I could not trace any legends about it until the arrival of Columbkille. Probably he had found it at a sufficient distance from his little community to serve its needs. He would certainly bless it according to the custom of Irish saints, so that its water might always be fresh and good for his monks. Indeed when he had driven the demons from the glen, he would be certain to go over every part of it, blessing it as he walked along.

I have said so much of serious and earnest pilgrims to the Holy Well, that it is only fair to give an example of one professed Catholic, who treated the thought of it, or at least of the approach to it, with no small indifference. Thomas was a lame man, who had the utmost difficulty in crawling over the ground, and lived about twenty miles from Glencolumbkille. Though lame on his feet he had extremely strong arms, and a fist like the proverbial "shoulder of mutton," which he was capable of using with powerful effect upon his foes. He was known to have stabbed a man who had troubled him in some unspecified way. As I heard him put it, "Sure and the boy asked me for the loan of my knife, and by gob, I lent it him." He uttered the last words with an ominous action of his arm like that of one plunging a knife into another. Amongst other misdemeanours he had been caught more than once selling illicit whiskey, and had come into conflict with the authorities, and finally with the greater power of his priest. Consequently he had been sent on pilgrimage to the Holy Well of Glencolumbkille.

Seeing his lameness I was curious to know how he got on with his pilgrimage, which must have been a severe task for one with so little use of his feet. When I questioned him, his answer was simple and to the point. "Well, your honour," he replied, with a mischievous smile lurking at the corners of his mouth, "the houly father did not tell me to walk all that way, good luck to him, may the Blessed Virgin give him long life. So I got many a lift by the way. But I stayed at Glen four days that he might think I had walked the whole way. Sure, he niver asked me how I got there, and by gob, it's not myself is the boy that would tell him." I could not help smiling at this very worldly-wise way of performing a penance: Thomas knew that I was a Protestant and that he might answer my smile with one of his own. So he smiled so broadly that he seemed minded to split his face in two. For one case of this kind, it

must be admitted that there are a hundred at least who have not a taint of guile in them, but go on pilgrimage in humble faith and undoubtedly receive

the reward of peace.

From the Holy Well it is a short steep climb to the top of the Head itself, which commands an extensive view over particularly wild and desolate country. The most striking object a little to the north is the narrow and precipitous promontory known as the Sturrall, or "Hog's back," to which it bears more than a slight resemblance. possible to walk along its crumbling edge, or to climb down its sloping sides; but three qualities are essential, a firm foot, a sound heart, and a steady head. The natives of the glen walk all over it from end to end; sometimes they climb down its steep flanks to little hollows, where abundant rich grass grows. This they bind up in a bundle and bring back with them as a priceless possession in a country where good grass is so sparse. In some places they are sure-footed enough to climb down to the water's edge, where the waves almost always break at a great height. Beneath its rugged flanks they set their lobster-pots in suitable places, which they visit not only in their boats but from the summit itself.

I saw a strongly built, handsome young fellow working his way down without a rope, and with an amazing rapidity if the difficulties of the descent be taken into consideration. Not many even experienced climbers are able to go down a cliff-side with the fierce waves roaring hungrily beneath them. An abyss is one thing; some have an unholy pleasure in standing on its edge and gazing down into its gloomy depths. But when the great deep is tossing beneath, it is quite another thing; it is so unstable in itself, that it seems to make the footing unstable too. But the young man minded the angry sea no more than level ground; he never

seemed to hesitate for a moment, but set his feet down one after the other more easily and lightly than many do on a grassy pasture. I did not see him reach the beach, if beach it can be truly called, a turn in the great cliff hid him from my sight; but ever and anon his cheery whistle soared upwards to tell that he was alive and happy in his adventure.

The whole of the coast-line to Port is precipitous in the extreme; every turn of the grassy summit gives exciting pictures of marvellous sublimity, everywhere is heard the roaring of the sea and the thud of the waves against the iron rocks. In one spot is the "Giant's Saw-pit," which is a narrow opening between two rocks absolutely sheer, and of a great height. It is possible to climb down the slope on its eastern side by hugging the smooth rock. A little platform overhangs the sea at a height of a few hundred feet above the boiling waves. I know of no other prospect of the kind, which so fully combines sublimity of outline with magnificence of colour. When the clear May sunlight shines brilliantly upon the Atlantic the tossing waters take a deep sapphire hue, above which the rocks rise bright, with a multitude of varying shades of pearly grey fading into an indescribably beautiful tone of pink. Bluish grey lichens lie close to the golden green circles of that other of their kind known as the "crottle." Wherever there is a niche with a particle of soil in it, dark-green cushions of the sea thrift lift their dainty blossoms, softened by the distance into an ethereal pink, and shivering with every stir of the breeze.

Beneath is a crowd of sea-birds of many kinds, busily employed in making their ragged nests, or choosing convenient cavities wherein to lay their eggs. The waves roar like far-off thunder, ever and anon breaking with a mighty crash which seems to shake the solid rock. The foam was blown into my face, as I stood like a sea-mew on my narrow platform stretched right over the yawning abyss. A wall of rock as smooth as if it had been cut by the machinery of man, towered behind me, the great deep lay beneath and beyond me with many cragbound inlets, and the distant waves gradually blending with the horizon. A sharper gust of wind, a single false step might have plunged me into the raging waters, for along those cliffs they know no calm. Slowly I climbed up the steep slope, looking well to my feet, when even here I saw a draggledlooking, hibernated, painted lady butterfly searching with little prospect of success for a thistle, where it might lay its eggs. The battered insect seemed to add to the loneliness of the surroundings, and I wondered what instinct had driven it so far out of its course to a desolation so little suited to the

purpose of its being.

I do not know if Columbkille ever found his way so far along the edge of the cliffs as the "Giant's Saw-pit." But it has been said of him that he loved to climb to the top of Glen Head when a storm was beating shoreward from the Atlantic. Nor could any situation be found better calculated to inspire him with holy meditations upon the power of the Almighty. He was not only intensely devout, his soul was steeped in the ancient poetry of his race. He is said to have illuminated three hundred manuscripts, and to have written three hundred poems. That is a pious exaggeration, but it does serve to show the pursuits which filled his scanty leisure. When the angry wind lashed the wild waves, and the Holy Glen was deep in blinding mist, his thoughts penetrated beyond earth and its passions; he was alone with God. When the wind grew too furious for him to gaze down the beetling crags or over the waste of waters, he would find his way to the cell which lay by his "Bed" to meditate upon the vanity of so much that men hold dear.

Yet he loved his kind, and spent the greater part of his long life in bringing the light of the Gospel to those who sat in darkness, and as he surely believed, in the shadow of a fate worse than death.

I have not been able to discover the year in which he left his community in the Holy Glen. The story of his leaving Ireland to settle in Iona is quite simply told in the old Irish life of the Saint, which asserts that his principal aim was to convert the Picts to Christianity. It may have been so; but there is another tradition which may have just a shade of truth in it. Like most enthusiasts, and indeed most Irishmen, he had a fiery temper, which he was not always able to master. Indeed, in the life-stories of these older Irish Saints, the reader cannot fail to be struck with the frequency with which they imprecated heavy curses upon districts or individuals. It may be that this trait in their character has to a certain extent been borrowed from the tales of the Druids, their predecessors, who seem to have been gifted with a pitiless temper which punished all opposition with unsparing severity. Even in Adamnan's beautiful life of his relative and predecessor in the abbacy of Iona, traces of this fiery spirit in the "Dove of the Churches" may be caught now and then, though undoubtedly for the most part he earned his name by his gentleness.

In the year 561, Diarmid, the King of Ireland, had come into conflict with the Saint on two distinct grounds, the one of which according to the thought of the time was substantial, the other, though it seems frivolous to us, may have been real enough to its victim. The young Prince Curnan had accidentally killed one of his companions while at play, whereupon he took sanctuary with his clansman, Columbkille. But the King laid hold of him and put him to death, which act of his in itself involved a double offence; he had violated sanctuary

and had slain a kinsman of the Saint, who is said to have nursed this two-fold grievance in his heart. He could not forget that he was a descendant of the O'Nials, as well as a father of the Church. Family ties and the duty of revenge were of the life breath of the ancient Irish, whether saints or sinners, who would deem themselves disgraced if they neglected either. Columbkilfe was not superior to his race on this occasion, or in this respect, but forgot the

Saint in the clansman.

The other act of Diarmid's which is said to have provoked him was quaint in itself, and hardly merited the punishment which fell upon him. St. Finnian of Clonard, Columbkille's former tutor, had an exceptionally beautiful manuscript copy of the Psalter, probably made by his own hand, which he valued among his chief possessions. His old pupil was a great lover and producer of works of this kind, on one of which he is said to have been occupied a few days before his death. He earnestly craved permission to copy the holy manuscript, that he might keep it by him as something of supreme worth. From some reason, St. Finnian, not a little churlishly, refused permission, and Columbkille went away sorely disappointed. But he was not the kind of man to sit down content with such a refusal: by some means he got hold of the precious manuscript, and working day and night produced a perfect copy of it. When St. Finnian came to hear of what had been done, whether from his old pupil's lips or another, he was moved to anger and demanded that the copy, made at the expense of so much labour, should be handed over to him.

Columbkille had no mind to surrender what it had cost him so much time and trouble to obtain. The decision of the question at issue was referred to Diarmid the King. His answer, though couched in quaint and homely language, has something to be said for it. "To every cow," he said, "belongs

its calf; so to every book belongs its copy." Columbkille is said to have been highly indignant at a decision which cut him to the quick. Turning to Diarmid he accused him of giving an unjust judgment, of which he would surely repent in a little time. Back from Clonard he went to his clansmen of the O'Donnells, who received him with the greatest honour. He stirred them, who little needed such provocation, to make war upon the King, both to revenge the death of Curnal and the insult put upon himself in the matter of the manuscript. They gathered their forces and marched to join battle with Diarmid: at Cooladrummon, near Sligo, they met, and Diarmid was defeated with heavy slaughter of his troops. So the Saint was revenged upon the King, who had twice caused him bitter offence.

Curiously enough, the very manuscript in dispute, according to tradition, was enclosed in a costly shrine, and became the "Cathach" or "battle-book" of the O'Donnells, who always had it carried into battle with them for centuries after the death of the Saint. It was supposed to be a talisman for victory like the Ark to the ancient Israelites. The shrine of this lost relic has been carefully preserved and is now in the collection of the Royal Irish Academy. Whether the traditional authority is sufficient to give this manuscript to Columbkille or not, I am not able to decide. But the work of the shrine itself is of a fine order, and it forms a beautiful cover for a treasured possession.

Not long afterwards, at the assembly at Teltown, Columbkille is said to have been excommunicated as having caused so much bloodshed in a manner wholly unbecoming to an ecclesiastic. If that sentence really were passed upon him, it was soon quashed. But according to one tradition the cause of his retirement to Glencolumbkille was the repentant knowledge that he had caused the death of so

many Irishmen. I heard this in the place itself, I know not on what authority; but it was certainly believed by some of the peasants. If the two events have any connection with one another, which I am not inclined to believe, he certainly chose a wild place to make the centre of his penitential prayers, though he would not be likely to forget his troubles in that wild solitude. But whatever happened to him in the year after the battle at Cooladrummon, he appears to have had no peace in his soul. It may be that he was even then meditating his journey to Scotland, and restless because his spirit

was on fire with missionary zeal alone.

At all events he is said to have consulted his friend. St. Molaise of Inishmurray, who was cast in a gentler mould than himself, asking what penance was due from him for having incited his clansmen to fight against King Diarmid. To him Columbkille opened out all his heart in Confession. and he received what to him must have been the severest of all penances. He was commanded to go to a land from which he could not see Ireland, and to convert to Christianity as many in number as had fallen in the battle. Such is the traditional cause of the Saint's voyage to Iona and his establishment of a monastery there which was destined to win fame in every part of Europe. In its graveyard, for many generations, the Kings of Scotland were laid, and pilgrims flocked thither to receive the Saint's blessing during his lifetime and his intercession after he had passed from earth. A terrible penance it was for one who loved his native land so passionately as to have written long after he had left it these pathetic lines:

Happy are ye, O waves, that are permitted To kiss the shores of Erin.
Happy, thrice happy are ye, O birds,
That from your dwellings amongst her cliffs
Can see her dark groves of oak
And her fields that are always green.

It is not easy to decide whether the foregoing tradition is true in detail, or whether it simply conceals a substratum of truth. On the one hand it seems not unnatural that the "old life of the Saint "should desire to conceal a circumstance which reflected severely upon the sanctity of its hero. On the other hand the story of the copying of the manuscript is a little far-fetched, though we know how passionately fond of such things Columbkille actually was. But it has something of the appearance of a story made to illustrate a proverbial saving, which leads to doubt of its authenticity. That the battle at Cooladrummon took place in 561 seems certain, no less than the fact that the Saint's fellow-tribesmen formed one of the armies in conflict. If Diarmid had in fact violated the right of sanctuary and caused one of the clan to be slain, there is good reason to believe that the princely blood prevailed over the gentleness of the Saint and spurred him on to arouse his clansmen against the King.

Nor is it easy to put entirely on one side the tradition of the excommunication at Teltown. It is hardly likely that the Church would proceed against a leader of such distinction without serious reason; nor is it probable that such a story against one so famous as Columbkille would be lightly invented without some equally serious reason. Nor does it invalidate the tradition, when we find that the sentence was soon reversed out of respect for the noble work which he had already done in Ireland. Furthermore, the tradition which I heard in Glencolumbkille itself, that he retired thither in repentance of what he had done, does give some colour to the belief that he may have done it. Taking all things into consideration I am inclined to believe the story of the death of Curnan and its revenge at Cooladrummon, though the manuscript tale seems to me to rest on a somewhat flimsy foundation, and to be improbable in itself.

Be that as it may, in 653, Columbkille, accompanied by a faithful band of disciples, including Baithen who succeeded him, set sail for Iona, which his kinsman, the King of Dalriada or western Scotland, had given to him, and made it the centre of untiring missionary effort. The prohibition to visit Ireland does not seem to have been so rigid as it sounded when it was uttered. Adamnan records two certain visits to his native land, one of which was undertaken on a mission of grave importance. Possibly the cause, which is usually placed second, comes first, and the event which followed his arrival in Ireland may well have been due to the fact that he was actually there. The King of Dalriada was an under-king to the King of Ireland, and he sorely longed to be free to govern his own kingdom. To negotiate terms on this highly important matter the Saint was chosen, with great wisdom as the issue proved, for he returned successful in the object of his embassy.

I have already alluded to Columbkille's close connection with, and friendship for, the bards; but the subject is one of some interest and merits further brief notice. The members of this learned class had become burdensome to the people of Ireland by their exactions. Wherever they went they took an immense retinue with them and demanded sumptuous provision for themselves and their attendants. If they were not contented by the King himself, or the noblemen whom they honoured with a visit, if they were not entertained magnificently and presented with large gifts in exchange for their stories or songs, they took a characteristic revenge. They poured forth stinging satires upon the one or the other, which made life unbearable to the victim. The unlucky King Guaire, of an older time, who had done his best to make handsome provision for them, had failed to satisfy them, when they satirized him so severely that on a later occasion he impoverished himself to welcome them according to their own estimate of their deserts. Consequently they changed their tune, and sang of him ever afterwards as "Guaire of the liberal hand."

In 575, Aedh, the King of Ireland, after a vain attempt to put down the bards, summoned a convention at Drumceat to make an end of their extortions. They in their turn, not a little alarmed by this determined attack upon their privileges, sought for an arbitrator between themselves and the angry monarch. Who could be more fitting than Columbkille, who was both a devout ecclesiastic of wide-spread reputation, and himself a bard of some compass? To him they therefore applied, either by a message to Iona or when he had set foot in Ireland, to help them in their hour of need. It is somewhat mythically asserted that he came with his eyes blindfolded, that he might not break the letter of his penance. By his wisdom and tact he was able to please both sides of the dispute: he satisfied the King by limiting the privileges of the bards, he contented them by preserving more of these privileges than they had hoped. In this way the order of poets was continued, which was in danger of being disbanded if not exiled, and the people ceased to suffer from their extravagant extortions.

The bards, in their gratitude, were loud in their praises of the Saint: they sang odes in his honour so fulsome that even his modest soul was lifted up, and for the first time vanity entered into his heart. His companions looked up into the air, where, to their horror, they saw a great company of demons was gathered, mocking at their patron and friend. One of them plucked Columbkille's sleeve, and he also looked upward. He saw what they had seen; instantly his heart was smitten with bitter repentance, and his natural humility returned upon him

with deeper humiliation than was his wont. The moment the demons perceived that their mockery was vain, with evil looks upon their hideous faces they faded away and returned to their own place. That is a quaint old-world story, but it has this underlying truth, that a lowly-minded man like Columbkille had some human weakness, of which he repented bitterly the moment that he perceived it. Would that more vainglorious men than he would follow his example in this. Of his further mission I have already spoken, and need only remark that his statesmanlike gifts enabled him to solve two

problems of exceptional difficulty.

It must be borne in mind that Scotland owes its very name to Ireland, the people of which were always known in Europe as Scots. A large company of these Irish Scots conquered Argyleshire and most of Galloway, and ended by giving their name to the whole of the country, which at that time was for the most part peopled by the Picts. Columbkille's second visit to Ireland occurred, according to Adamnan, ten years later, when he is said to have visited his own monastery of Durrow along with that of St. Kieran of Clonmacnoise. At Iona I leave him; the reader who wishes to know more of the last thirty years of his life in that remote island will find what he desires in his life by Adamnan. It is a most fascinating little work, nor is there anything just like it in the range of ecclesiastical literature. No doubt it is filled with an account of the Saint's miracles and prophecies, for each of which the author cites witnesses, though some of them in somewhat vague and unconvincing terms.

But the character study is nearly perfect: it presents the picture of a truly noble character, a Saint of God who needs no formal canonization to do justice to his merits. If it be true that once he suffered his feelings as a clansman to get the better

of his very real sanctity, he repented and he made full amends for what was a very natural act, by the unselfish service which he rendered at the cost of continual labour to Christianity amongst the Picts and Northumbrian England. The "Little Flowers of St. Francis," though a beautiful book, is not one whit more beautiful than that of the ninth successor of Columbkille in Iona. I am not concerned in this place to say more about that theme: it is almost an impertinence to criticize such a loving record of a great and holy man, though the details offer many opportunities for criticism. My concern is with the Saint in his native county, where I have literally followed in his footsteps, as far as I have been able to trace them.

None of his haunts in County Donegal has moved me more deeply than Glencolumbkille, called for all time by his name. It is amid wild scenes such as that displays that we can learn to appreciate something of the mystic temperament of the man, who was at home with nature in her most terrible aspects, no less than in her gentler landscapes. There I could recall something of that primitive monastery with its rigorous set of rules and its continual hardship, hardship indeed such as even a slum-dweller in our own day does not undergo. Such adornment as was practised was reserved for the altar furniture. for the sacred vestments, more than all else for the wonderful manuscripts illuminated by the monks in their cells, perhaps in the church itself, for scriptorium there was none at that early period. When I gazed down upon that stone "Bed," on which the Saint actually lay, I could not help feeling that a convict was better housed than he. Yet he went about his work as abbot with a cheerful countenance, except indeed, when he had to reprove some novice for spying on his movements or committing some breach of the monastic rules. His birth set him on a level with the kings of his day; his piety and his missionary enterprise lifted him far above any or all of them. Yet he lived like the poorest kern in his native land, never using money for himself, but to serve the needs of the poor and to exercise bountiful hospitality. His food was milk and bread, varied sometimes with fish: nor in this respect did he separate himself from the lowliest of the brethren. That he saw visions of wonder and beauty is no matter for astonishment; such visions, though they shape themselves according to human limitations, come to all of those who have sought and found communion with God. That was Columbkille's almost unbroken experience: sometimes the glory of the world after death shone before not only his sleeping but his waking eyes. He passed away as he had lived, active to the end of his seventy-six years, happy to go from peace on earth to more perfect peace in heaven. To his native county he is the saint of saints, his memory is its most precious heritage; even now, after nearly fourteen hundred years, it is possible to hear traditions of him told over the cabin-fire during the long and weary winter nights.

## DONEGAL ABBEY AND THE FOUR MASTERS

It is growing dark! Yet one line more, And then my work for the day is o'er.

—Longfellow.

LITTLE corner of County Donegal stretches along the north-eastern angle of Donegal Bay. In prehistoric days, and in the earlier years of Irish history, it was the continual battleground of the men of Ulster and the men of Connacht, and it changed rulers as each prevailed in turn. Finally the men of Ulster beat down all resistance in the disputed territory, and it forms a part of Ulster to-day. It does not contain many square miles yet it is sacred to all true Irish hearts the whole world over. To the north the little town of Donegal stands at a lovely corner of the blue, peaceful bay. In itself, though not otherwise remarkable, it is neat and picturesque, surrounding a triangular green known as the "Diamond," which is bordered by trees and spreading along both sides of the brawling river Eask. One of the most beautiful walks near to it is that through the "Banks," as they are called, which leads by the side of the river to the sea. The trees are tall and stately, the waters bright and clear, the sunlight casts alternate shadows and gleams of light along the rural roadway, and the birds rejoice in their green covert.

Opposite lies the old quay, which has never been useful for vessels of any great burden; the water of the Bay is shallow and only suitable for smaller craft.

DONEGAL TOWN



The most picturesque view of the little town is to be had from this dingy-looking old landing-place, which ends with the fine two-arched bridge and has the spire of the Protestant church lifting its head above the surrounding buildings. In the town there is perhaps the largest agency for the excellent Donegal tweeds, which are tasteful in colour and of wonderful wearing capacity. The proprietor of this shop, thirty years ago, was a little bearded man suffering from a plethora of forehead, who only needed a couple of glasses of whiskey to make him unfold his wisdom. I have seen a small crowd gathered round him in the bar parlour of the Arran Arms, gazing in simple wonder at his fluent utterance, while first one then another of his intimates called frequent attention to his "noble brow." He thought that he was giving forth the wisdom of the ages, and they believed him, when he was merely making a lamentable exhibition of himself and displaying much fluid ignorance.

On Fair-days, the Diamond itself, and the road leading to the station are crowded with a multitude of cattle, with some donkeys and a few horses. such times may be seen in perfection the protracted issue of an Irish bargain, which always seems to need the arbitration of a third party. He will bid first the one hold out his hand and praise him to the skies, then he will command the other to do likewise and bespatter him with a like commendation. Next he will try to induce the seller to agree to a certain price and take the hand of the buyer, whereto the former will reply, "I will not!" and promptly put his hand behind him. Then he endeavours to shorten the interval between the seller's and the buyer's price, until often enough only the difference of half-a-crown remains to part the two. When this point is reached the arbitrator uses his utmost persuasion to bring matters to a head. For the most part his eloquence is quite successful, and the three

go off to one of the smaller inns to wet their bargain. So the half-crown with sundry others speedily

vanishes, and sometimes there is a free fight.

Disputations of this kind, in which a more than legal subtlety is usually displayed, soon attract a considerable crowd, which only disperses when the bargain has come to a more or less timely end. They are not silent by any means, these straggling idlers; they take a breathless interest in every point of the proceedings and express their own opinions in humorous and pungent language. I have seen and heard at least a hundred such transactions with unfailing delight: but I have never been able to reproduce the words uttered, which are alike amusing and inimitable. No seller would go away happy unless he had enjoyed a friendly wrangle of this kind; even if he obtained the first price which he asked, he would feel that he had been defrauded of his rights. There is always a trait of oriental life to be seen in the doings of the Irish, which may well have descended from their far-off ancestry before they set out on their westward course.

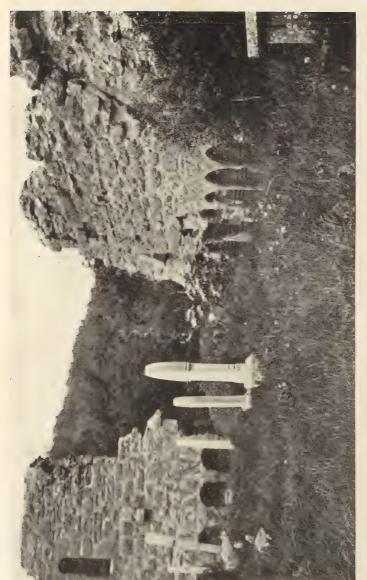
But neither the Donegal tweed shop, nor the Fair itself, though no inconsiderable attractions to the student of human nature, are the principal lions of Donegal. To the more instructed pilgrim it is famed for two ruined buildings, each of which has been the scene of many memorable episodes in Irish history. Rising from the left bank of the river is the fine Elizabethan fortified dwelling-house erected by Sir Basil Brooke out of the ruins of the former castle founded by Hugh Roe O'Donnell in 1505, and dismantled by his namesake and descendant when he set forth to join the Spanish force at Kinsale, in 1601. How much of the older building remained for the later tenant, it is by no means easy to decide. From the nature of the site, the O'Donnell's castle would probably be one of those large square towers which are to be found in many parts of Ireland, such as that at Claregalway which is in a wonderful state of preservation. However that may have been, it was the stronghold of the O'Donnells in their perennial warfare with the O'Neils of Tyrone and the later Tudor monarchs. When, however, Hugh O'Neil, the great Earl of Tyrone, joined forces with his former rival, the strong fortress was garrisoned chiefly against the army of Queen Elizabeth.

The older building is utterly gone; the striking remains of the Elizabethan fort are left to bear witness to their former strength and beauty, haunted no more by princes and men-at-arms but by clouds of chattering jackdaws and chirping sparrows. The great kitchen is in a fair state of preservation, while the spacious wine-cellar betrays Sir Basil Brooke's taste for a fluid stronger than his name. The large drawing-room is roofless, but it contains a magnificent stone fireplace, exquisitely carved, and bearing the escutcheon of its owner. One of the fortified turrets may be seen, where once one of the rather feeble cannons of that date had its station. Two windows also are left, finely arched and carved with well moulded mullions, one of which has been blocked up in recent times for some unknown reason; but had it been left open it would only have commanded the prospect of an ample bed of exceptionally sturdy nettles. The architects of our time would do well to study the construction of buildings of this type, which would help to improve their taste, when called upon to build spacious houses.

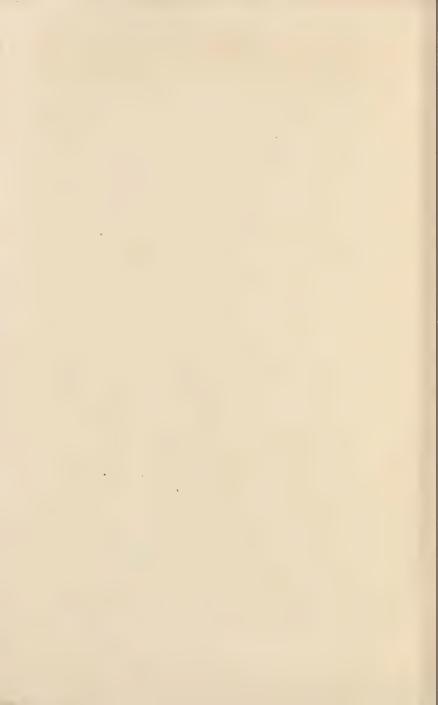
More celebrated than the Elizabethan castle, or even than the older one which preceded it, on a promontory jutting out into the bay whose quiet waters murmur close to its mouldering walls, stands the shattered remnant of the great Franciscan Abbey. This once noble building was begun in 1474 by Nuala, the first wife of the elder Hugh Roe O'Donnell, and completed several years later by his second wife, Fingalla, O'Donnell himself and his successors endowed it sumptuously, and many of his race lie buried within its precincts, though their tombs are no longer to be distinguished. When the monasteries were dissolved this great foundation suffered more than most of them, though its fate was long delayed. So destructive was the hand of the spoiler that the ruins fail to give a correct idea of its former grandeur and importance, not only in Donegal but all over Ireland. Part of the great church with one of the transepts survives, though the space is blocked up with ugly modern monuments, which take away from its real beauty. But it has the remains of a fine east window, which once was filled with rare stained glass. A few of the arches of the cloisters are still standing, and the ground-plan of the building may be traced with a fair degree of

accuracy.

In a large fragment of the conventual buildings is a door leading to a first-floor chamber, which may have been the entrance to the hospitium. But it is vain to attempt to describe in detail the fragments; somewhat ragged as they are in appearance, they betray traces of ruined majesty. But insignificant as the ruins are as a whole, they are known and honoured by the learned in Europe and America, though some of these grave pundits might not be able to locate their exact site, so little does detailed Irish geography interest any save the true antiquarian. It was here that the unique manuscript of the "Annals of the Four Masters'' was penned during the first half of the seventeenth century. Of this great national work I shall say more in its place: here and there I shall cull an illustration from its invaluable pages to show its very real historical worth. Unable as I am to read Gaelic, I shall take my few quotations from the monumental edition and fine translation of the noted antiquary, John O'Donovan, which was published in seven quarto volumes between the years



THE CLOISTERS, DONEGAL ABBEY



1848 and 1851. This is a truly remarkable work of wide erudition, which does honour to the great Irish scholar who spent so many years in

producing it.

In recalling the history of a foundation it is desirable to give a portrait of the founder. Where a line engraving or an etching is to be had, that is quite a simple task: where such are unknown, words must take their place, and what words can be fitter than those of the "Four Masters" themselves? Their description of the great chieftain, if all allowance be made for possible partiality, is vivid, and

presents a pen-picture of much grace:

"This O'Donnell was the full moon of hospitality and nobility of the north, the most genial and valiant, the most prudent in war and peace, and of the best jurisdiction, law, and rule of all the Gaels in Ireland. For there was no defence made in Tyrconnell during his time, except to close the doors against the wind; the best protector of the Church and the learned, a man who had given great alms in honour of the Lord of the elements; the man by whom a castle was first raised and erected at Donegal, that it might serve as a sustaining bulwark for his descendants; and a monastery of Friars de Observantia in Tyrconnell, namely the monastery at Donegal; a man who had made predatory excursions around through Ireland, and a man who may justly be styled the Augustus of north-west Europe. He died after having gained the victory over the devil and the world, and after Extreme Unction and good penance, at his own fortress in Donegal."

Such is the strongly coloured portrait of the founder of the abbey, limned to the life by his monkish admirers. It may be noted that the phrase "predatory excursions" simply means raids upon the English garrison, whom he considered it part of his duty to harass to the best of his power. Nor can the picture be deemed overdrawn, notwithstanding

the superlatives and what might appear loving exaggeration. The man who was able to found a strong castle and a richly endowed abbey was no common man. He was dreaded by the English governors as a foe worthy of their steel, who was not only a warrior but a statesman. Of him the brilliant and chivalrous Earl of Surrey bore witness to Henry VIII. that "he was a right wise man." Such a testimony from a foe carries great weight, and goes far to justify the enthusiasm of the "Four

Masters" when they drew his portrait.

Founded by a benefactor of princely generosity and sincere devotion to his ancient faith, the foundation itself, though small in comparison with the magnificence of Fountains or Furness Abbeys. was handsomely built and munificently endowed. Its situation was well chosen, and as far as can be judged from the remains, the church and conventual buildings were planned on a scale not common in western Ireland at that time. Its great tower would be seen from afar by all who sailed up the wide waters of Donegal Bay, and its hospitality was well-known to strangers from far around. Its inside furniture in all departments of the conduct of worship was exceptionally varied and sumptuous, though the monks themselves might live plainly enough for the most part. The abbots, rejoicing in the protection and devotion of the O'Donnell chieftains, would be men of great influence throughout the neighbourhood. Even in its decay it stands in marked contrast to the plainer and older abbey of Magherabeg, which lies a few miles away, at a little distance from the road to Ballyshannon.

The sacristan has given an inventory of some of its treasures in his vigorous and pathetic narrative of the destruction of the abbey by fire in 1600-1. It was then occupied by an English garrison and was undergoing a stout siege. The unlucky soldiers were driven out just at the moment when a ship, laden

with stores for their benefit, went down in a storm before their eyes. The monk enumerates sixteen large silver chalices, "of which two were not gilt," two ciboriums or canopies to cover the high altar with the "blessed Sacrament," forty vestments for priests, some of cloth of gold or silver, some curiously wrought with costly gold ornaments, and the rest of silk. It was while these sacred vestments and vessels were being borne to a place of greater safety, that the fire broke out which destroyed much of the monastery with its finely glazed windows. What a stupendous contrast is herein presented to the lowly foundations of Columbkille with their tiny churches and their humble cells! One bronze, or at best, one silver chalice would serve his turn, and the "blessed Sacrament" itself would be celebrated without any sumptuous canopies to shroud its mysteries. His priests wore no cloth of silver or gold: they were clad in rough linen next to their skin, covered with an outer garment of plain woollen. So times change, and priests and churches change with them.

The brethren were scattered amongst the neighbouring woods, finding such subsistences as they could. From time to time in small companies they stole forth to linger for a while, and in the end to die within the hallowed precincts of their ancient home. Their ashes mingle with those of the chiefs of their race, in graves now indistinguishable from the luxuriant grass and rank herbage which hide them from sight. Two years later, by some untoward accident, the chalices and robes fell into the sacrilegious hands of Oliver Lambert, the English Governor of Connacht. This graceless representative of the British monarch used them "for profane purposes," turning the one into drinking-cups, and tearing the other into shreds. He regarded them as rags of "the great whore of Babylon," as the heathenish trappings of Popish superstition: nor did

he spare them in his reforming zeal. Thus the once stately abbey with its noble buildings and its priceless stained glass was left roofless and ruined, its only choristers the wild winds, the murmuring waters, and the shilling sea-mews. Rory O'Donnell, some years later, attempted to restore it, but failed in his endeavour: so it remains much as Oliver Lambert left it, though time has added his mordant

tooth to the destruction of the fire.

The hallowed ruins stand in a lovely and sequestered nook: on the opposite shore of the inlet the green woodland of the "Donegal Banks" waves over its secluded path, the delight of children and the resting-place of tired townsfolk. The outer wall of the sacred enclosure hangs over the pebbled beach, along which the advancing or retreating tide lazily rolls its murmurous waters. The mingled clamour of rooks and starlings, the melodious music of many lesser birds, the solemn sobbing of the gentle winds of heaven now chant their matins where the psalmody of the monks was heard of old, the sweet air seasoned by the salt of the sea breathes freshly where once clouds of incense rose to the vaulted roof. Yet loving memory lingers amid its mouldering arches, calling forth from the past bright pictures of its former glories, peopling the vacant aisles with the forms of mitred abbots and quiet monks, of stately chieftains and stern English commanders. Last and least, like the clown at the end of a pantomime, comes Oliver Lambert drinking profane healths to his sovereign from the consecrated chalices, while shuddering Catholics look on at the blasphemous sacrilege.

That noblest of Irish heroes, the younger Hugh Roe O'Donnell, seems to rise up once more in his stalwart manhood to bend before the altar which his great ancestor had reared before he marched on that fatal journey to the south, from which he was destined never to return. His ashes slumber in

Spanish soil, while the abbey which he loved is encumbered with masses of modern monumental ugliness. Where the "Red Hugh" trod and worshipped, the grass is crowded with hideous slabs and ghastly headstones. But the grey-lichened walls with their garlands of green pellitory and clinging ivy still recall his deeds of daring and his unfailing courtesy, his handsome presence and his blameless life.

Hither, in the early days of 1632, came the "Four Masters," bearing with them a rare collection of Irish manuscripts of many kinds and various dates. Ancient chronicles penned by the monks of the earlier centuries of the Christian Church, heroic poems and traditions of the legends of their race, written records of many a hero and many a saint, perhaps, too, examples of bardic poetry, had been brought together at the cost of great labour and much money, chiefly by Michael O'Clery himself, the leader and inspirer of the rest. Amid the roofless walls the faithful company reared a homely cottage, differing little from those of the peasants around them, where by the middle of 1636 they had compiled perhaps the most valuable historical work of its kind in Europe. It was entitled "The Annals of Ireland," and is now generally known as "The Annals of the Four Masters." Summer and winter alike, amid storm and calm, they worked at their self-imposed task, pausing only to pray, sleep, eat and drink. The compilation which they made in a manuscript of two parts is one of the most prized possessions of the Royal Irish Academy, to which it has found its way by happy fortune, and where it rests with many other memorials of the learning and piety of Ireland in the far past.

What then can be said of the "Four Masters" themselves, what manner of men were they, and how were they fitted for the accomplishment of their patriotic purpose? It will suffice my object to

present a slight sketch of one of them, who was alike their chief, their guide, and the driving force of their devoted labour. Michael O'Clery (1575-1643) was descended from a noble house, whose estate lay near Ballyshannon, and who had at all times been famous as poets and scholars. He received the early part of his education at various monastic schools in Ireland: from early youth he showed himself always to be a deeply interested student of Irish traditions and history. Either just before or soon after he had entered the Franciscan monastery at Louvain, he took Franciscan Orders, but never relaxed his historical researches. The guardian of the convent, whose name, Macanward, has an Irish sound, soon recognized his special gifts and his vital concern in the history of his native land. In 1620 he sent O'Clery over to Ireland on a roving commission to search out and collect as many Irish manuscripts as had survived.

The great scholar, now in the prime of his life. rejoiced greatly in his task: fervent patriot as he was, he had got work to his mind and he did it with uncommon thoroughness. He spent fifteen laborious years in gathering, copying, abstracting, annotating and arranging a vast number of manuscripts, which would have been of priceless value to-day had they escaped the malice of time and the destructive madness of man. During the whole of this period he was travelling over Ireland, often at great personal risk in those disturbed times, resting now at one Franciscan monastery, now at another. At Athlone, for instance, in 1630, he put the finishing touches to his list of all of the "Kings of Ireland" with dates and notes of which the original manuscript still survives in the Burgundian Library of Brussels. About the same time he had completed his "Book of Invasions," which describes the inroads and settlements of the various races which found their way to Ireland. This interesting work is still extant and to

be found in the collection of the Royal Irish

Academy.

He certainly had a canine appetite for work on all matters and traditions relating to Erin. At the very time when he had been busy with compilations of such compass as those already noted, he is credited with a "Martyrology of Ireland," which may have been used and in great measure absorbed by his younger contemporary, Colgan, in his fuller work on the same theme. In this way the great scholar laboured on without murmuring in bitter poverty. Sometimes he was heard to lament the hard fate of his beloved land, but with his own lot he was always contented. During his waking hours he never seems to have spent an idle moment; he was either copying out some manuscript of which he could not obtain possession, or committing to writing some venerable oral tradition. His appetite for compilation of chronicles of one sort or another was insatiable: when he had completed one long work in this kind, he began at once to make painstaking researches in preparation for a second. It is our happiness to know that some, at least, of his chronicles are still to be found in the libraries of foreign monasteries, though it is to be feared that some were destroyed by the infamous sack of Louvain in recent years.

All this time a loftier purpose had been gradually shaping itself in his mind: his patriotic heart longed to set in order the annals of his beloved country. In 1632 this determination began to bear fruit and he made preparations to tell her story from 2984 B.C. to A.D. 1616. That was a stupendous project for one man, especially at a time when Ireland was disturbed by continual fighting. It needed the setting in order of many manuscripts, the analysis of their contents, and their digestion into annalistic form. In addition to all this it needed a critical turn of mind to sift the true from the false. O'Clery had not only made a unique collection of ancient Irish

manuscripts, but he was also filled to the full with a noble and unselfish enthusiasm which carried him through positive dangers and frequent weariness to a triumphant conclusion. Though cherishing a warm affection for the national legends, and accepting many more of them than a modern historian would think of doing, he was never simply the compiler of everything that met his eye; he did use his judgment as far as he was able, though it was by no means an infallible guide. Like most Irishmen he was deeply imbued with the conviction of the truth of the past glories of Erin, hence he was led to credit her, more than once, with many which

she never possessed.

Realizing that he could not compile so vast a narrative single-handed, he took with him to his lonely hut his kinsmen Conary, Cucogry O'Clery and Ferfesa O'Mulconry. The second of these was, like himself, a great scholar, who took no part in politics, but lived quietly at Kilbarron Castle near Ballyshannon, pursuing his historical researches. But as was said in an English document, "being a mere Irishman" his estate was forfeited to King Iames, and he was turned out to shift as best he could. He dragged out the last years of his life in great poverty till 1666. Such was James's method of fulfilling his promise to care for his Irish subjects, to whose ancient kings he was proud of tracing his ancestry. But who could expect anything better from the learned, but slatternly first of the Stewarts, who was destined to rule over Britain and to sow broadcast the seeds of the storm, whereof his ill-fated son was to reap the whirlwind-crop in later years?

Under the guiding care of Michael O'Clery, his three assistants-in-chief, with the aid of certain others well versed in historical studies, continued their united efforts for nearly four years, and brought them to an end in 1636. He was both editor-in-chief

and actual writer of much of the great manuscript, at least half of which was actually penned by his own hand. No precisely similar book, either in magnitude or calibre, has come down to our time from the Europe of that period. Most of the documents used have either been lost or scattered amongst the universities of Europe, while a few survive in Oxford, in private collections, and in Ireland. As has been said, many of them must have been destroyed in the barbaric and brutal sack of Louvain, which has brought indelible disgrace upon the last of the German Kaisers: hence the value of the huge compilation is evident, both because it is a compilation and because it certainly contains the pith of many manuscripts, which have

sunk beneath the stream of time.

What then can be said of the general character and fidelity of a work covering the vast expanse of four thousand five hundred years of the history of a nation, and beginning with the coming to Ireland of the mythical "Ceasair, the granddaughter of Noah?" That would not seem to be an auspicious opening to a chronicle designed to be a faithful representation of historical truth. But the hasty critic needs to pause and to peruse these "Annals" before he passes ignorant censure upon their method and their scope. Though more credulous than the modern scientific historian, whose only credulity consists in his incredulity, Michael O'Clery perceived as plainly as any later student, the difference in actual value between legend and history. No doubt he set down the confused traditions of far-off antiquity as he found them recorded, perhaps more than half believing their authenticity, but leaving them to the judgment of posterity. This he did briefly and barely, so that he and his coadjutors might have fuller time and space to treat of events of less suspicious character and nearer to their own time.

Hence the earliest centuries occupy a comparatively short space in the "Annals," which increase in fullness and detail as they approach their conclusion. That fact, in itself, gives sure evidence of the general soundness of O'Clery's judgment, no less than of his estimate of the relative importance of the events recorded. There can be no question that his heart warmed to the ancient legends, that their glories shot a thrill of patriotic enthusiasm through his very being. But as he had no means of testing them by comparison with contemporary history, he set them down in their place: but he preferred not to dwell on them, and told them with almost the severe brevity of a simple catalogue. Moreover, in these legends, wild as some of them seem to a scientific age, some things of no mean value are preserved: though they may not deal with actual fact, they do present pictures of past thoughts and past life which are of deep interest at least to the student of sociology. Their tellers might tell their tales in a fabulous fashion, but they could not hide the manners and thought of their own time. In any case, O'Clery contented himself with giving sketches in simple outline rather than fuller pictures in great part imaginary.

Amongst other important matters it was his constant purpose to give the most correct date possible to each event recorded: where such dates were traceable he succeeded in unearthing them with surprising precision. He took untold trouble to fulfil this object of his, and only resorted to conjecture when that broken reed was the solitary support ready to his hand. Otherwise uncorroborated dates are confirmed by the careful insertion of outstanding natural phenomena, such as eclipses, earthquakes and the like. In some cases his conjectural dates are more correct than those flung out at random by less careful annalists, who would despise him and his works. More than once modern astronomers, by

making exact calculations of the times of past eclipses, have corroborated the statements of this old historiographer who wrote nearly three centuries ago. Nor did he, like modern historians of the highly critical cast, despise a legend simply because it was a legend, and thus convict himself of positive folly. Those which he was inclined to accept he told at greater length than those of which he was more doubtful, without adding a comment, but leaving the final decisions of them to future readers. He did not regard it part of the business of the annalist to be also a commentator.

The whole manuscript consists of at least eleven thousand pages in quarto, for the most part penned in that exquisite caligraphy for which Irishmen were once famed throughout Europe. Michael O'Clery himself used the old Irish characters, which he wrote in a running hand with some slight unevenness in certain of the letters, but with a legibility greatly to be desired in these days of machine-made writing. To estimate fully the worth of the original compilation it must be borne in mind that the surviving Irish manuscripts in spite of their credulous belief in the perfect civilization of their country in the past, even to-day are remarkable for their number and antiquarian value. O'Clery had spared himself no pains and collected most of those extant in his own time. What is more, by almost superhuman diligence and patience he had made himself thoroughly acquainted with their contents, before he and his companions set pen to The knowledge thus gained he used with the nice discernment of a great scholar of unusual breadth and depth, so that with the help of his friends he was able to make a digest notable in its compass, and of truly surprising accuracy in many of its details.

It is likely enough that the compilers wrote with the manuscripts at hand, that they might be consulted

when occasion required. But it seems probable that in many cases they wrote from O'Clery's own notes, confirming them from time to time by reference to the original. The whole course of the work and its final results are a striking example of co-operative labour wisely directed and well bestowed. No one knows how many hours a day were occupied in the task: it seems probable that the little company would consult together often, both on the matter which was to be put down and the actual amount of writing to be allotted to each. As far as I can judge the corrections in the original manuscript are comparatively few, if its magnitude be taken into consideration. Nothing was allowed to be done hurriedly; yet at the same time persistent progress was sought, and achieved with every hour. When their hut was unavailable during the disturbances of the period, the authors took refuge in the huts of the neighbouring peasantry, where they would find a warm welcome and deep sympathy with the task which they had undertaken. Ignorant as the peasants might be, they had still a great pride in the traditions of their race.

As might reasonably be expected, before the days of conjectural theorizing and minute research, the earliest centuries are filled with mythical personages and legendary lore. They contain, though in a most attenuated form, such matters as were the themes of the bards, long after the supposed date of their occurrence, which no doubt they amplified with picturesque flourishes to tickle the ears of their listeners. But even so, their ancient traditions cannot be summarily dismissed as mere nonsense on that account, after the lordly fashion of so many pseudo-scientific historians. Just as every superstition may be founded upon some minute kernel of fact, so every legend has some foundation in actuality, however slight. Myth and legend will always have a real value, not merely as giving hints of the progress of thought amongst the simpler thinkers of the past, but as throwing positive light upon the times of their chroniclers. Myth is for the most part concerned with attempts to explain natural phenomena, legend treats of the doings of the men and women of the past told with such additions as have been made by the generations of

poet and tale-teller.

As time goes on myth and legend become blended into one composite narrative, the separate strands of which only a subtle, and at the same time sympathetic thinker can hope to disentangle. Furthermore, in them many forgotten customs are preserved, while through their golden haze the figures of men and women who actually lived may be seen dimly as in the phantoms of a dream. When a mythical figure is represented as wearing a certain sort of garment, it is obvious that the chronicler who recorded the myth had seen that garment, which in all probability formed part of the costume of his own period. The same remark applies with especial force to the weapons described, which could have had no existence in the form in which they are described at a date long preceding the time of the describer. Thus they are of much importance to the student who would reconstruct the habits of life during the ages in which the legends and myths were related in their completed form.

To a certain extent the earliest pages of the "Annals" resemble a strikingly bald prose epitome of the Homeric poems, or the "Theogony" ascribed to Hesiod. This portion of their story is not unlike the narrative of the ancient myths of Greece, which forms the preamble to Grote's otherwise admirable history. He did not know what to do with the myths, which were quite alien to his usual manner of thinking: he simply told them as he found them, whether written or sung. For the most part though

these pages of the "Annals" treat of myth and legend, the descriptions of the heroes and heroines in them are robbed of the wonted graces of myth and legend. Sometimes the years are chronicled almost in single lines, while decades pass rapidly as the hurried tickings of a clock. Still, even amid such shadowy company, the reader finds the frequent record of an eclipse, which, though dark in itself can yet throw a flood of light upon the exact chronology of the event recorded. Sometimes, too, an earthquake is mentioned, which was extensive enough to be commemorated in other records, and once more the time of its occurrence can be dated

with comparative correctness.

The sound historian never despises the phantom shapes looming faintly through the mists of the ages. He tests each and draws from it something not wholly unreal, something not entirely removed from the human. I do not for a single moment pretend that Michael O'Clery was capable of such nicety of scientific discrimination. That would be to demand too much from an annalist living in the first half of the seventeenth century: moreover, he was an Irishman glowing with an intense pride in Irish traditions and the past of his country. Though it does not seem absolutely probable, he may have actually believed that the oldest myths were literal history, just as many still believe that the legends of "Genesis" are exact truth. But whether he believed them or did not, he has at least given the opportunity for the exercise of a finer intellectual judgment to the historians of the present day. They commonly treat the mythical history of early Greece and Rome with respectful criticism, and there is no reason why they should not extend the same courtesy to the ancient Irish legends.

In the childhood of any race, the thought of man is too completely absorbed in the struggles of the present to concern himself with the history of the past. When he does think of his ancestors, he pictures them as living in a more glorious age than the present, he uses their example to fire his courage in battle, or to face the perils of the deep. But he transfers to them the garments which he himself wears, the weapons which he himself uses, the customs which rule so much of his own everyday life. When he elevates his forefathers into the rank of gods, he offers to them the food and drink in which he himself delights, and moulds their character upon the pattern of his own. Thus, at least he gives a well-defined clue to the progressive thought of the race, which, though sometimes slender, is a trustworthy guide to the authors of such marvels of industry and acute scholarship as the "Golden

Bough."

Thus even the earliest centuries of the "Annals" have had their worth in enabling such scholars as Dr. P. W. Joyce to win a true insight into the character of the races, which have succeeded one another in the occupation of Ireland. Legendary heroes have usually something more than a merely phantom existence: when the garments of loving exaggeration have been stripped off, a real man is almost certain to appear. He may not have belonged to the century in which he has been placed by the poet or teller of tales, but to the period in which each of these worthies himself was living. Furthermore, he may have been merely the type of an ancient chieftain. But, after all, such a type is invaluable as illustrating what was expected from the chieftain of the poet's own date. exaggeration has arisen from an actual quality or circumstance, which has gradually been heightened into a heroic magnificence so great as to seem wholly fabulous. It is the business of the student of anthropology to reduce the exaggeration to its lowest terms, so that he may have the chance of getting at something near the fact. On the whole

the element of exaggeration in the "Annals" is so

little as to require but small reduction.

Though the manners and customs of the past can be dimly divined from the compilation by casual expressions and unintentional hints, its one prominent defect is the absence of any systematic record of such matters throughout the whole of its course. But it must always be borne in mind that the compilers made no attempt to produce a social history, they were writing down annals, and they clung to their purpose. The manners and customs of an early period seem of small account to those who live amongst them and practise them, though they are of supreme interest to the students of later generations. Here and there, with a regrettably sparing hand, are scattered along their pages brief fragments of ancient poetry, which are priceless in themselves as bearing witness to the culture of the people by whom they were sung or written. Those which he does find inspire the careful reader with an unappeasable longing for more. A nation's poetry presents more of the essence of its thought, more, too, of its habits and customs than the plain prose of its chronicles. It may not set forth events in the cold clear light of exact history; but it does thrill and throb with the emotions and thoughts of the long forgotten men and women of its own age. while it embalms many features of their social life which would else have been lost to posterity.

Macaulay hit upon a profound truth when he insisted upon the importance of a people's ballads to the historian. He may have pressed his point too far, and not entirely succeeded in the examples which he wrote with uncommon vigour. But he saw, and taught others to see, the priceless worth of the snatches of poetry which have come down to us from the past in the works of prose historians and philosophers. There is a truer representation of the spirit of ancient Israel in the "Song of Deborah"

than in the prose account of the same defeat of Sisera. Similarly the "Battle of Brunanburh" gives a more faithful picture of the warfare of its time than the "Anglo-Saxon Chronicle" itself. No one may be able to say exactly where Brunanburh was, though the upholders of opposite views are alike positive and combative: but the reader does understand how the champions fought, and the spirit of dauntless daring which inspired their hearts. A song, for example, may mention the wearing of a torc, or a brooch of gold, which the prose historian would deem beneath his notice. Hence it must ever be a matter for sincere regret that the "Four Masters" have not given us more examples of the kind.

When, however, they come down to the events immediately preceding them, or to the happenings of their own day, their story takes a livelier hue and presents a clearer picture of men and their doings. In spite of a certain stiffness and dryness of style, perhaps inevitable in annalistic writing, and the use of an older form of Irish than was prevalent during the time of their compilation, they give the reader a large number of striking character-sketches of the greater chiefs and more notable warriors. What is more remarkable, even when recording the often brutal and always clumsy policy of their English oppressors, they strive to tell the truth fairly and impartially. That cannot be affirmed of most of the contemporary English writers, including Edmund Spenser, who regarded the native Irish as mere troublesome barbarians, utterly beyond the pale of civilization, whom it was alike wise and legitimate to massacre pitilessly, or to starve to death. His prose survey of the "State of Ireland" is a remarkable document, which plainly illustrates the incapacity of an exceptionally brilliant Englishman to understand the temperament of the Irishman, and the justice of his claim to his own country.

Nowhere is this ineradicable prejudice more manifest than in the Fourth Book of his "Fäerie Queene," the allegory of which would be well under-stood by the statesmen of his day. In exquisite poetry he embodies his ideal of justice, in the person of Arthegal and Talus, his "iron-man." Lord Arthur Grey is plainly represented by his ideal knight, whose only conception of justice to the Irish was to hammer them into submission, and drive them from the lands which were their own. That is the plain statement of a fact which may be excused, but cannot be denied by any impartial student of Irish history. In marked contrast to Edmund Spenser, in his prose and in his poetry stands the more judicial temper of the "Annals," the compilers of which, no doubt, were heart and soul with their countrymen in their struggle for liberty, yet strove to tell the story of events with comparative impartiality. That they did not fully succeed in their attempt is but natural. But surely it is nobler to have failed in a laudable object than to have had not the slightest conception that such an object was possible.

In treating of these stirring events, which reflect, it must be admitted, much more glory upon the Irish chieftains than upon their English opponents. the narrative sometimes moves with considerable vigour, especially when the annalists are treating of a favourite hero. Then at times they descend to livelier detail, and the more wooden method of annalistic writing is transfigured into lively biography. Even in their scantier sketches they seldom omit to estimate the character of this or that chieftain or commander, noting always with blameless piety and the inevitable bias of monks, if he were a true son of the Church or not. While compiling the annals of the whole of Ireland, they are usually more attractive when they are setting down the story of the north-western portion with which they were most completely familiar. Here they linger with mindful

affection over the tragic tales of the chieftains, whom they had known intimately, and loved with all the fervour of their Irish hearts. In this part of their work it is easy to feel the emotion with which they wrote, and almost to catch the tear-mark on the page which tells of the death of their friend and hero.

Of none have they left a more living portrait than of Hugh Roe O'Donnell, the younger, who almost succeeded in driving his English foes from Ireland. He was indeed a true knight without fear and without reproach, whose life-story reads like that of the hero of an old romance. Yet none can doubt that it is essentially true: Dr. Joyce in his admirable "Short History of the Irish People," which every Englishman ought to study with close attention, after careful research amongst contemporary documents has in essence presented the same picture of this gallant warrior and generous Irishman. I can only give the salient points of his career in brief abstract with a few illustrative quotations hardly less brief, though the temptation to narrate it in full is uncommonly strong. An old prophecy had foretold the birth of an O'Donnell with a bloodmark on his side, who would prove a mighty champion of his race. There may be some connection in the mind of the unknown prophet with the "blood-red hand of Ulster," which was the badge of the O'Connell clan.

However that may be, many believed that it was fulfilled in the person of the "Red Hugh," "whose name and renown spread through the provinces of Ireland, even before he arrived at the age of manhood, for his goodly growth, wisdom, sagacity, and noble deeds." It may be remarked that not one of these qualities is materially exaggerated in the striking personality of the young man. When he was almost grown to manhood Elizabeth sent over as Lord Deputy the crafty and unscrupulous

Sir John Perrott, whose character may be gleaned from the "Annals," but is still more surely betrayed by his own acts and despatches. Hearing of the marvellous prowess of the stripling, and fearing that he would prove a dangerous foe if suffered to remain at large, Perrott determined to lay hold of him by treachery and to throw him into prison. By his spies he kept himself closely informed of the movements of the youth, so that he might entrap him at

the first favourable opportunity.

In those days there was a considerable commerce between Spain and Ireland, as may be seen in the very buildings of Galway, perhaps most notably in Lynch's Castle, which has a distinctly Spanish appearance. It happened that O'Donnell, with a few young friends, was paying a visit to his old friend MacSwyne of Rathmullen Castle on Lough Swilly, when a ship purporting to be from Spain with a cargo of wine aboard was reported to have made its appearance in the harbour. The castellan at once commanded large purchases to be made; neither then nor now was good wine ever unwelcome to the Irishman's palate. With much courtesy the captain sent back word that he had only a small quantity left, but that he would be highly honoured if the noble company would come on board and taste his wine. Without a thought of treachery the "Red Hugh" with some of his friends, including two of the young O'Neils, sons of the famous Earl of Tyrone, accepted the crafty invitation and were soon busily engaged in cheerful converse and an elegant banquet provided by the captain.

In the midst of this pleasant occupation for some reason the young man looked up and saw that the ship was making sail, and had already moved far from the land. He soon came to the conclusion that he had been betrayed by his own trustful spirit: but nothing was left for him save to watch the course of events and endure in patience. Gradually

the crafty emissary of the treacherous Lord Deputy reached the open sea, whereupon he made his way straight to Dublin and placed his prisoners in the hands of the Lord Deputy. They were at once thrown into prison and kept under a strict guard. The indignation of O'Donnell at his untoward fate may be better imagined than described: but there can be no question that from that time he conceived in his heart a hatred of England and a resolution to be avenged of that dastardly act of treachery the very moment that he became free. His was a temper which might easily have been conciliated by honourable treatment, but was moved to undying anger by the underhand manner in which he had been entrapped. Yet Perrott plumed himself upon an act of treachery, which would have disgraced a

starving beggar by the wayside.

After three years of close and dreary imprisonment the youth endeavoured to escape, but he was soon caught and brought back to a severer captivity than before. In the meantime Sir William Fitzwilliam, a sordid and avaricious man who sought to make his fortune out of his appointment, succeeded Sir John Perrott as Lord Deputy. To this official no bribes came amiss: in very truth he had an itching palm which could only be soothed by the touch of gold. Just at this time Hugh O'Neil, the great Earl of Tyrone, sought to marry his daughter to the young O'Donnell and thus heal the long enmity between these two powerful clans. It seems probable that he first entered into negotiations of some sort with the Lord Deputy in an attempt to procure the release of his prisoners. This was impossible when so high a value was attached to O'Donnell's captivity. But other means may have been tried; O'Neil was never slow to perceive and use to his advantage the weaknesses of the English commanders with whom he had to do. Bribery may well have done its work, for Fitzwilliam suddenly relaxed his vigilance over his young captives. This was in the winter of 1592, when the snow lay deep upon the ground, which had long been held in the

iron fetters of frost.

Seizing upon the opportunity, the "Red Hugh," with two of the young O'Neils, once more escaped from the prison through the common sewer of the castle. One of the O'Neils in the darkness strayed away from his companions and apparently was O'Donnell with the other found a guide who proved faithful to them: lightly clad as they were the two youths sought to find their way through the bitter winter weather to the friendly fortress of Hugh O'Byrne in the wild Glen Malure. roads in County Wicklow at that time were not wellmade and easily passable as they are at the present time, and the hardship of the journey seemed likely to make an end of the youths. After struggling over pathless wilds they at length sank down utterly worn out on the winter snow. The guide, being cast in a stronger mould, hastened forward to summon help: in the end he reached O'Byrne's castle, who at once sent out men to aid the all but lifeless fugitives. When they were found, "their bodies were already covered with white-bordered shrouds of hailstones, freezing around them, and their light clothes adhered to their skin, so that covered as they were with the snow, it did not appear to the men who had arrived that they were human beings at all, for they found no life in their members, but just as if they were dead." That is a graphic passage in the story of the winter-flight of the two young noblemen, told in the simplest language and under the influence of intense emotion. O'Neil was not strong enough to survive exposure so long, and cold so extreme: the moment that he was lifted from the ground he fell back into the arms of his supporters and breathed his last. Thus a further cause was added to O'Donnell's hatred of England in the loss of a dearly loved companion. His sturdier frame enabled him to recover, but a little later he was constrained to have his great toes amputated, which had been severely frost-bitten. That again is one of the little descriptive touches so frequent in this part of the "Annals," which lend interest to the reading. In very truth this amputation would sorely hamper his movements during the untiring activities of his subsequent campaigns. In spite of his eagerness to reach his father's house he was compelled to remain a considerable time in the security of that friendly castle, which lay far out of the way of the English forces, that he might recover from the horrors of that winter's night.

As soon as he was able to move, O'Donnell hastened northwards by hidden tracks and finally reached his father's castle in Ballyshannon, where his unexpected arrival was greeted with transports of joy. The old chieftain had scarcely expected to have his son restored to him save as a corpse for burial. Feeling the weight of years pressing upon him, he resigned his office to his recovered son, who was invested with full honours and the white wand of chieftaincy on the Rock of Doon. The young man was well fitted by nature to be chieftain of a proud and warlike clan: his personal beauty was great; though not tall he was endowed with much physical strength, while he had the additional attribute of a singularly clear and musical voice. Moreover, he was a born captain of dauntless bravery and great resourcefulness, who had the faculty of endearing himself to the lowliest of his soldiers. Like his great ancestor, whose character-sketch has already been given from the same source, he was hospitable to a fault, and he had the open hand so dear to the Irish peasantry. Nor did he forget his vow of vengeance upon his unscrupulous captor, now that he had the means at his disposal to repay his treachery with interest,

I need not follow him through the exciting story of his success in war against the English garrison, in which he was nobly aided by his wise and wary father-in-law, Hugh O'Neil. For six years the two chieftains, bound together by close and intimate ties, and trusting one another entirely, made head against great odds, suffered no defeats, and won many They had vainly endeavoured to interest in their cause Philip II. of Spain, who gave them liberal promises but perhaps had too lasting a remembrance of the rout of his Invincible Armada to fulfil them. Yet there can be little doubt that had he despatched a considerable force to their aid, the position of England in Ireland would have been precarious. When this ill-starred monarch passed away he was succeeded by his son, also Philip, to whom the Irish leaders sent an earnest ambassage pleading for speedy assistance. The son, like the father, was prodigal of promises: he would soon help them in their endeavour to drive out their oppressors and to restore the supremacy of the Catholic religion. Like his father, he found it easier to promise than to keep his word; so he kept the two chiefs on the tenter-hooks of unfulfilled expectation.

At length, after at least three years of long and weary waiting, two Spanish ships with three thousand men landed at Kinsale, the very worst place which they could have chosen for their adventure. Here they could not hope to conceal their advent from the English Navy, and the ground itself was ill-suited for a successful battle. In this paltry fashion did the self-styled "champion of the Catholic Faith" attempt to help the two struggling Earls in Ireland. As has almost always been the case in Irish warfare for liberty, there was a traitor in the camp, Niel Garv O'Donnell, the kinsman of the "Red Hugh." Jealous of his younger kinsman's fame he entered into treaty with the English on condition that he should succeed to his estates. In

1600-1 the traitor occupied Donegal Abbey for a brief space: when he was driven forth by his angry kinsmen, he took refuge at the smaller abbey of Magherabeg, a few miles away. Here he would almost certainly have been destroyed if the "Red Hugh" had not been summoned to join the Spanish force at Kinsale.

Reluctantly he left the traitor behind him, having first destroyed his castle in Donegal that it might not fall into the hands of his enemies and be a point of vantage to them. With his little army he made his way southward with a speed and good order truly astonishing: but where the leader is trustworthy the followers will go with him to death itself. Near Kinsale he found his father-in-law eagerly awaiting his presence. That prudent chief had scarcely been able to restrain the boastful Spanish commander from making a premature attack upon the English forces, which were strongly posted and ready to receive the onset. It may be, too, that he in his turn had been boasting to his ally of the valour and wise conduct of his son-in-law in terms not entirely flattering to that worthy or to his nation. At all events, the Spaniard appears to have goaded the "Red Hugh" into action by his taunts against the advice of O'Neil, while he himself proved to be of little use when the time came to fight.

So it came to pass that without giving his men time to rest thoroughly, and almost on the moment of his arrival, O'Donnell gave battle to the English in spite of their strong position and slightly more numerous forces. He performed prodigies of valour, but all to no purpose. The little Irish army was routed, though again and again he encouraged his troop, "until his voice and speech were strained by the vehemence and the loudness of the language in which he addressed all in general, requesting his nobles to stand by him and fight their enemies." But his personal gallantry and his exhortations

were alike fruitless: for the first time in his adventurous career he was defeated, when, as the "Four Masters" say pointedly enough, "he was seized with great fury, rage and anxiety of mind, so that he did not sleep, or rest soundly for the space of three nights." After this disaster the incompetent Spanish captain betook himself to his ships and sailed away to Spain, leaving Ireland to many years

of struggling to be free.

O'Donnell did not remain long in Ireland after the battle near Kinsale, nor did he again attempt to collect his scattered and disheartened troops. Once more he refused to listen to his astuter father-in-law and determined to take his way to Spain to pray its King personally for further aid of a more substantial nature, whereby he could secure the liberty of his beloved native land. He appointed one of his brothers to be his delegate, before he left Ireland, as it proved for ever:

"Rory O'Donnell was he to whom O'Donnell had on the night of his departure left the government of his people and his lands, and everything that was hereditary to him until he should return, and commanded Rory and O'Neil to be friendly to each other, as they themselves both had been, and they

promised him this thing."

Having thus arranged his affairs in the hope of returning with considerable Spanish help, he set sail for Corunna, from which he proceeded at once to the Court of Spain. Here he was well received and treated with the highest distinction. Once more the King promised him large succours for the cause which was vital to him, once more he loitered and procrastinated until O'Donnell finally lost heart.

Many a time the Irish chieftain might be seen wandering lonely on the shores of Corunna, looking longingly northward to the Erin of his heart. Even in Spain he was not to be suffered to live in safety by his English enemies who knew him best. The

unworthy Perrott was once more appointed Lord Deputy: soon he added to his crime of treachery the double crime of treachery and murder. By the instrumentality of one Blake, whose name betrays his native land, he caused his noble enemy to be poisoned. There is little doubt that this story of his end is true, however little flattering to English pride. It must not be forgotten that assassination by steel or poison were not unknown weapons to the Elizabethan governors of Ireland; nay, so great a statesman as the Earl of Sussex openly boasted in one of his despatches that he had nearly succeeded in cutting off an Irish leader by poison. Such were the blots upon the escutcheons of some at least of the men who were entrusted with the final conquest of Ireland.

Such, in the prime of his manhood, was the end of Hugh Roe O'Donnell, one of the greatest of Irishmen, who was able to make head against the superior forces of the English garrison for six years. It was a tragic and unworthy conclusion to a career at once so romantic and so unselfish. Doctor Joyce supports me in the opinion expressed above on the cause of his death, and he has searched out the evidence with his accustomed care. I have culled the story of his career mainly from the "Annals" to give an example of the care with which they told a story, which had itself been told before the very eyes of its narrators not in words alone, but in resolute actions. His brother Rory was by no means his equal as a commander, or in deeds of daring, though he proved himself to be no coward in his country's cause: but with the death of the "Red Hugh" the hope of Irish liberty faded away and had to wait until a far later date to win a measure of success.

For nearly six years more O'Neil and Rory O'Donnell held grimly to their estates, which had been long confiscated to the crown. Their lives

were always in danger, and often enough they had to flee from one place of concealment to another to avoid the tyrannical severity of their foes. O'Neil, by a Lancashire tradition, is said to have taken refuge at least once near Rochdale, where a clough still bears the name of "Tyrone's Bed." He was credited with an irresistible fascination for women according to the Lancashire story, which ended ill for the maiden who supplied him with provisions during the time of his hiding. In spite of his honest and earnest efforts to prevent her from falling under the spell, she succumbed and died of a broken heart when he once more returned to his native land. I know not the source of this tradition which John Roby has added to his interesting collection. As far as I can discover it has no foundation in the Irish records; nor do I think it probable that he ever visited this sequestered dell.

Worn out at length by their continual persecution, the two Earls determined to quit Ireland for the Continent, never to return. They must indeed have suffered severely to induce them to make a resolution at that time so alien to the natural disposition of Irishmen. The passage in the "Annals" which describes their setting forth from Rathmullen, where the "Red Hugh" had been betrayed so many years before, ends with the following pathetic words wrung from the very heart of the

compilers:

"They embarked on the festival of the Holy Cross, in autumn (1607). This was a distinguished company, and it is certain that the sea has not wafted in modern times a number of persons in one ship more eminent in point of genealogy, heroic deeds, valour, feats of arms, and brave achievements than they. Would that God had permitted them to remain in their patrimonial inheritance until their children should arrive at the age of manhood! Woe to the heart that meditated, woe to the counsel that

recommended the project of this expedition, without knowing whether they would to the end of their lives be able to return to their native principalities

or patrimonies."

Those pathetic words give a clear insight into the patriotic temper of the annalists; they may have a little overshot their mark in the praise bestowed upon the company on board the ship, and some of their terms are curious. Beyond a doubt the high birth of the fugitives appealed most strongly to their own aristocratic prejudices. Nor is that reverence for birth by any means extinct in Ireland, or in England for that matter, while it is fully as strong in Scotland. But no reader can fail to sympathize with these earnest patriots, who saw all hopes of the freedom of their country cut off with the flight of the Earls. Truly those of their ancient vassals who stood bare-headed upon the shore of Rathmullen to bid them a last farewell would raise a keen of lamentation as piercing as if they had been accompanying their lifeless bodies to the grave. When the sail disappeared from sight, with it would disappear the high hopes and heroic endurance which the example of these great men had done so much to keep alive for so many years: as night settled on the blue waters of Lough Swilly, night would sink upon their souls, and they would go sorrowing away to tell the story of their heroes by the peat-smoke on many a winter's night.

In the end the two Earls and their friends found their way to Rome, where they were warmly welcomed by the Pope, who with perfect justice looked upon them as the true and tried champions of his cause in Ireland. That they had undoubtedly been; but they had been much more than that; they had been the untiring champions of Ireland itself in its fruitless struggle against the English supremacy. They did not leave their country until it seemed no longer possible to win its freedom. They endured

much hardship with brave and constant spirits: but in the end their patience was shattered and their hopes faded away. Often enough they must have talked over the brave deeds of the past, often enough they must have fought their battles over again. They must have recalled the familiar scenes of their homeland across the sea. Yet every story, every treasured memory would end with the sickening thought that it was their home no more, that here they were exiles in a foreign land, glorious in itself, but not their own.

Rory O'Donnell lingered heart-broken but a few months at most: he felt himself ill at ease in this city of refuge, in spite of his reverence for its papal chief. He seems never to have reconciled himself to the streets and palaces, to the different ways of life and the alien speech which he heard around him. He pined for the rugged mountains, the beautiful lakes and bays, the wild glens and forests, the brown bog and crystal rivers of his beloved Tyrconnell. His strong heart broke and his worn spirit went forth to join his more heroic brother in the hereafter. Hugh O'Neil survived him until the year 1616, with which be it noted that the "Annals of the Four Masters" come to a close. With great demonstrations of sorrow his weary body was laid by the side of his friend and fellow-exile. So this great spirit passed away in a foreign land, leaving the memory of great deeds amongst the people whom he loved so well, and for whom he gave himself so freely.

The "Four Masters" sum up his great gifts and his strong character with generous affection, but with

no inconsiderable amount of justice:

"O'Neil, son of Ferdoragh, who was styled the Earl of Tyrone at the Parliament of 1585, and was afterwards styled the O'Neil, died at an advanced age, after having passed his life in prosperity and happiness, in valiant and illustrious achievements,

in honour and nobleness. The place at which he died was Rome, on the 20th of July (1616), after exemplary penance for his sins, and gaining the victory over the world and the devil. Although he died far from Armagh, the burial-place of his ancestors, it was a token that God was pleased with his life, that the Lord permitted him no worse burial-place, namely Rome, the head city of the Christians. The person who here died was a powerful, mighty lord, with wisdom, subtlety, and profundity of mind and intellect; a warlike, valorous, predatory, enterprising lord in defending his religion and his patrimony against his enemies; a pious and charitable lord, mild and gentle with his friends, fierce and stern towards his enemies until he had brought them to submission and obedience to his authority; a lord who had not coveted to possess himself of the illegal or excessive property of another. except such as had been hereditary to his ancestors from a remote period; a lord with the authority and praiseworthy characteristics of a prince, who had not suffered theft or robbery, abduction or rape, spite or animosity to prevail during his reign, and he had kept the law as was meet for a prince."

I cannot regard the foregoing estimate of this exceptionally great and kingly Irishman as in any high degree over-drawn. The joy openly expressed at his departure by the English government was so ingenuous, so indecent, that it may be seen beyond cavil in what continual dread he was held by his English foes. His acute political capacity, his very real statesmanship, his undoubted courage in action, and his ability to profit by the moment of victory, had done much to make Irish resistance to picked men under the command of the Earl of Essex and others so protracted and so successful. It seems a pity that gifts of this kind should have been thrown away upon a losing cause, when they might have been used for the united good of England and

Ireland. But he was an Irishman first and a statesman second; it was his object to make his country free once more, and partly by the dissensions of some of his natural allies, partly by the withdrawal of "Hugh the Red" in his vain endeavours to gain Spanish succour which would really count, he failed. But it must be granted that he failed nobly,

and expiated his failure by self-banishment.

One of the traditions credits him with personal beauty of an intellectual cast: but in kingliness of bearing and nobility of soul he shone by comparison with the first of the Stewarts, who sought to subdue him. Nor did he ever sink to the despicable means freely adopted by his foes when they were striving to destroy him. His portrait in the "Annals" is firmly drawn and gives no unfavourable impression of the fuller style of that great work. It is a little stiff here and there in its English translation, where the style may be more flowing in the original. is freer from superlatives than some of the similar efforts; but the words seem to have been chosen judiciously to bring out the salient points of his character. It may have been from the pen of Michael O'Clery himself, though that is not entirely probable, who had known and honoured the wisest of the Irish leaders of his time. Indeed it is significant that the story of Ireland is carried no further than the year of his death, which appeared to the "Four Masters" to close one important period of Irish history.

A large part of the manuscript supplies the reader with an extensive gallery of portraits of extremely historical interest, if due allowance be made for patriotic and religious bias. The nearer the work comes down to the date of its writing, the fuller and more detailed are its pictures of the heroes of the Irish race. In the earlier centuries these are not entirely wanting; but a few lines like the scratches of a child's drawing do duty for a portrait. Yet

even in these not a little individuality is displayed, and some features stand out distinctly. But as the centuries pass, line is added to line, until a life-like etching is the latest result. Though the dry annalistic style shows itself a little awkwardly on most of the pages, sometimes the chroniclers are moved to an unwonted vigour and some degree of descriptive and pathetic power. In this way is told, as has been seen, the story of the "Red Hugh" and his comrade covered with a chill panoply of ice, or the later narrative of his prowess in the field and his sorrowful farewell to his home and

his country.

Such episodes as these can be found in no other record still extant, save the older manuscripts from which they were derived, which may have escaped the ravages of time and the barbarity of man. Those touches which they added from their own knowledge are the most interesting and picturesque in the whole of their compilation. Wherever they are found, they serve to fill the shifting panorama of events with living figures, sometimes moving with startling vigour and brilliant colouring. No doubt the episodes are comparatively few in the length of the work; but they do relieve the tedium of many of the pages which contain simply the list of events in each year. Sometimes only one event is noted, either because O'Clery knew of no more, or because he thought some unworthy of insertion. Both reasons seem to me to account for the brevity of many of the entries, for which I do not think that simple ignorance is a sufficient explanation.

When the chronicle meanders down to historical times, if its magnitude be considered, its general accuracy in dates and circumstances is truly surprising. It cannot be denied that many fabulous traditions have found their way into its pages; but these are the common blots of most historical records of the period, and for long after. Thucydides may

be said to have been the first to write scientific history, and he remained long without a precise follower. Even Tacitus did not disdain to insert into his sombre pages many unproved traditions, though he, like his great predecessor, was writing the history of his own time. Like Clarendon after him he had a refined method of blackening the characters of his political opponents, though he was more outspoken than the Court historian. The "Four Masters" never professed to be writing history, but compiling annals; hence they expressed few opinions except of persons, and did not always exclude what might have better been excluded. For a similar reason they put down what they found reported in other manuscripts without expressing

any judgment upon its accuracy.

Bare and meagre as much of their work inevitably is, that very characteristic points unmistakably to the generally sound judgment of O'Clery, the editorin-chief, who would seem to have known in some cases at least, what to omit, and what to include. His wide, deep, and for the most part sound scholarship is manifest upon almost every page, in spite of the credulity displayed in the earlier portion. apply these criticisms to him alone, because he was the leading spirit of the four, and there can be little doubt that his was the final voice in the collaboration. His kinsmen, too, were men of high repute for scholarship, especially in historical studies, and their united judgment would be of no small service in furnishing him with reasons which would help him to make up his mind upon doubtful points. The unity of the work remains one of its most striking features in spite of the disjointed nature of its contents, which shows how well the four and their assistants were able to unite their labours into a complete and harmonious whole.

Not even the party politician then need wonder at the secure place which the scanty ruins of Donegal Abbey hold, not only in the hearts of Irish scholars, but of all who are interested in Celtic history. While Ireland was suffering from pitiless prejudice and a ruthless tyranny, such as is without parallel in the long history of British rule elsewhere, while the Deputies sent over by British sovereigns themselves did not disdain to kidnap, to attempt to poison the noblest of her sons, while they openly deemed the native population unworthy of any consideration, however slight, within the mouldering walls of Donegal Abbey, these four brave scholars with their little band of helpers were busied in preserving from oblivion, the annals of their native land. A sorry hut sheltered them from summer heat and winter cold, from which often enough they were forced to fly from the persecution of their foes. Their food was scanty, their trials were many; the battered relics of former splendour were continually before their eyes, which could not fail to recall the extinguished light of other days.

I can picture them writing, studying, and writing again for nearly four long years, never certain for a moment if their lives would be taken, and their work given to the flames. By their unselfish devotion to the glory of their native land, they consecrated anew the venerable abbey, no less than by their unrecognized labour. Had Chichester been living in their day, I am very sure that he would have brought their work to an abrupt conclusion. Like most Lords Deputy, though far more statesmanlike than some of them, he had an extreme distrust of anything which might tend, even indirectly, to put new heart into the oppressed people. Strafford would have done is less certain, had he had the ordering of Ireland at this moment. had more enlightenment than most of his predecessors, stern author of the infamous scheme of "thorough" as he was. However that may be, and conjectures of what might have been are but futile after all, the "Four Masters" almost by a miracle escaped all dangers and were able to complete their task, thus rearing for themselves "a

monument more enduring than bronze."

Of the great work itself it is only possible to speak with deep respect and warm admiration. It might have contained matters of deeper interest to future students, had that been the purpose of its compilers. But they set out to chronicle events which they deemed to be of national importance, and they fulfilled their object with rare fidelity and untiring industry. Many a time their heart may well have burned within them when they were telling the story of the brave deeds of this or that chieftain, of the successes of the little armies of their countrymen, though these were destined to profit them nothing in the end. Many a time they may well have brushed away the tear which rose in their eyes when they had to tell of such a chieftain as the younger Hugh Roe O'Donnell, or of the sorrowful parting of the two Earls. But they never paused in their self-imposed labours, for the mere physical effort of writing so vast a manuscript is by no means light. On they went, chronicling events from year to year, from century to century, until they came to a conclusion with the death of the great Earl in 1616. By a good fortune, for which we cannot be too thankful, the manuscript is safely housed in Dublin, and has met with an editor worthy of its unique value.

A tiny spring begins on a bare mountain-side amid rugged rocks and scanty herbage. But as it moves along, it grows in volume and variety: it glides by fair landscapes and waving woods, by husbandmen labouring, and warriors fighting on its banks, by many a hamlet and many a town, until it loses itself in the broad sea. Even so the course of the "Annals" at first is thin and meagre: but as it moves quietly and steadily onward, it widens

into a mighty stream with many living figures, many mighty events upon its banks, till it loses itself in that unknown sea where past and future meet. The spot where that little band of devoted men met day after day, and year after year, toiling ever faithfully, ever unremittingly, without a thought of earthly reward, until they had finished their labours, is holy ground. Nature has made it lovely, they who haunted it so long ago have made it of good report. The exact site of the hut is lost amid the mists of the past, where they worked with an industry beyond all praise, with a courage which nothing could quench. I bring this stone to the cairn raised in their honour by abler scholars, to mark my affection and reverence for their high achievement.



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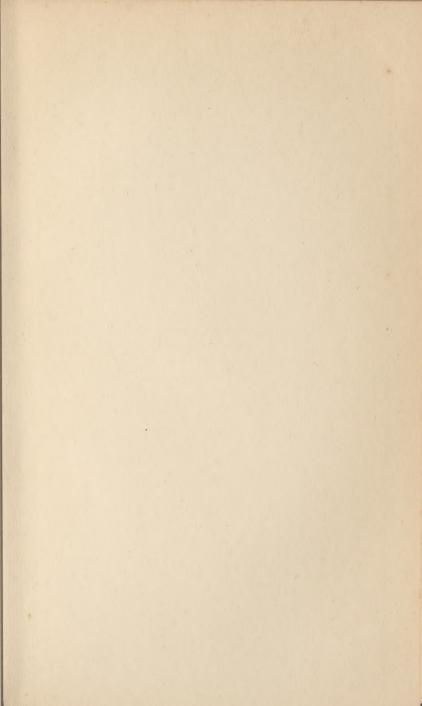


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